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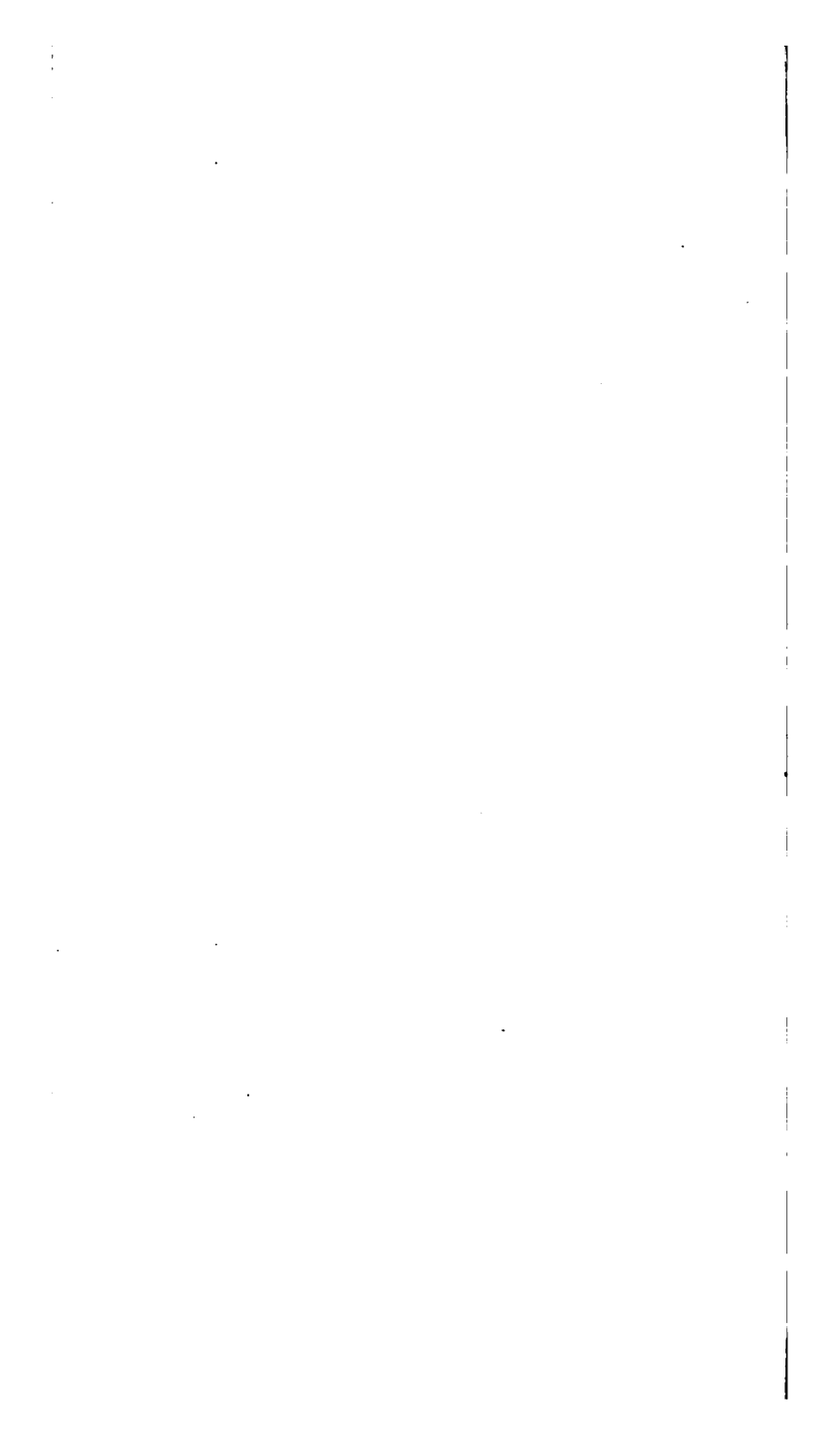
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LOG.

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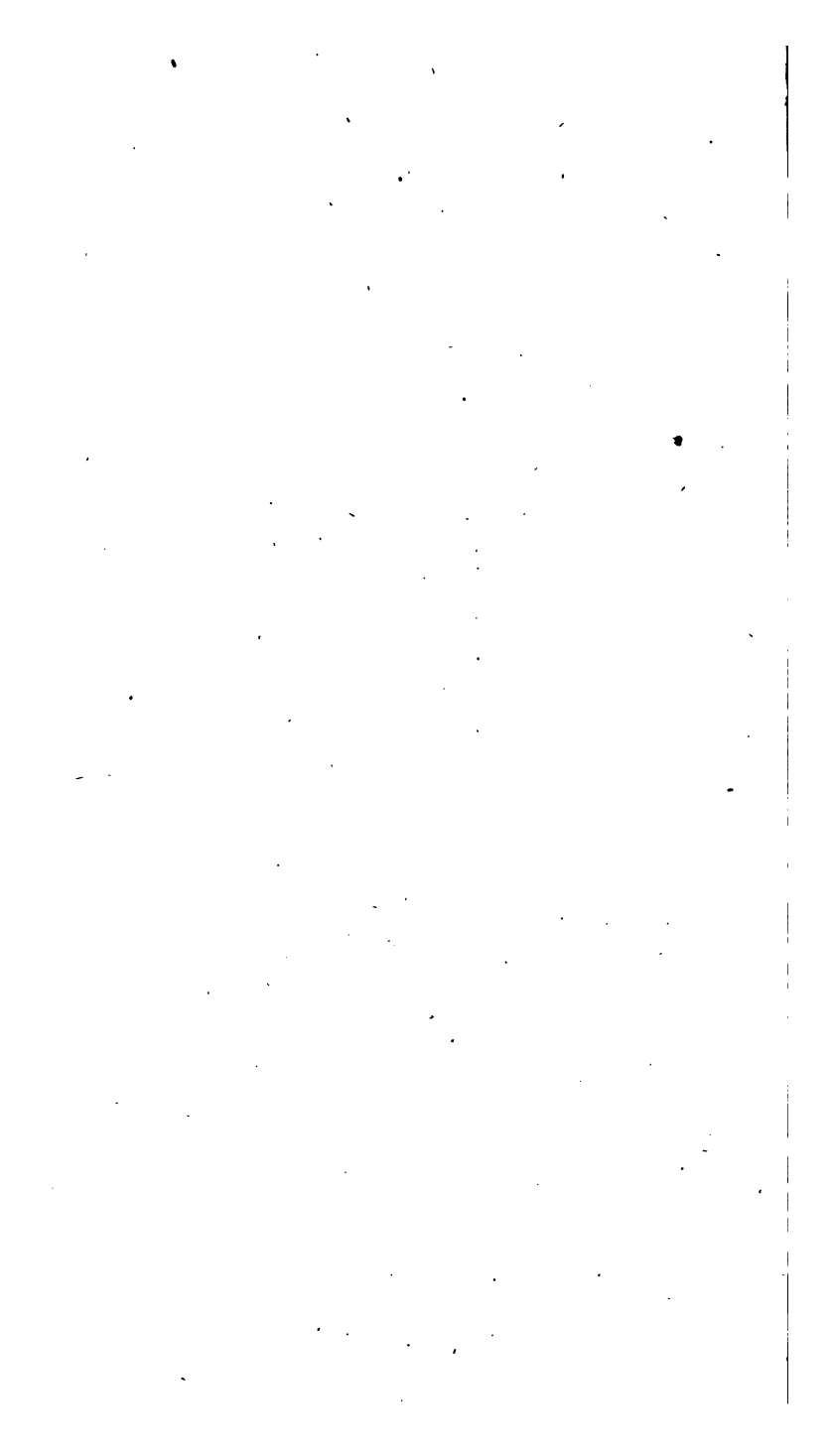
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TOM CRINGLE'S LOG.

CHAPTER I.

A SCENE OFF BERMUDA.

THE evening was closing in dark and rainy, with every appearance of a gale from the westward; and the weather had become so thick and boisterous, that the Lieutenant of the watch had ordered the look-out at the mast-head down on deck. The man, on his way down, had gone into the main-top to bring away some things he had left in going aloft, and was in the act of leaving it, when he sung out,—“A sail on the weather-bow.”—“What does she look like?”—“Can't rightly say, sir; she is in the middle of the thick weather to windward.”—“Stay where you are a little.—Jenkins, jump forward, and see what you can make of her from the foreyard.” Whilst the topman was obeying his instructions, the look-out again hailed—“She is a ship, sir, close-hauled on the same tack,—the weather clears, and I can see her now.”

The wind, ever since noon, had been blowing in heavy squalls, with appalling lulls between them.

One of these gusts had been so violent as to bury in the sea the lee-guns in the waist, although the brig had nothing set but her close-reefed main-topsail, and and reefed foresail. It was now spending its fury, and she was beginning to roll heavily, when, with a suddenness almost incredible to one unacquainted with these latitudes, the veil of mist that had hung to windward the whole day, was rent and drawn aside, and the red and level rays of the setting sun flashed at once, through a long arch of glowing clouds, on the black hull and tall spars of his Britannic Majesty's sloop, *Torch*. And, true enough, we were not the only spectators of this gloomy splendour; for, right in the wake of the moonlike sun, now half sunk in the sea, at the distance of a mile or more, lay a long warlike-looking craft, apparently a frigate or heavy corvette, rolling heavily and silently in the trough of the sea, with her masts, yards, and the scanty sail she had set, in strong relief against the glorious horizon.

Jenkins now hailed from the foreyard—"The strange sail is bearing up, sir." As he spoke, a flash was seen, followed, after what seemed a long interval, by the deadened report of the gun, as if it had been an echo, and the sharp half-ringing, half-hissing sound of the shot. It fell short, but close to us, and was evidently thrown from a heavy cannon, from the length of the range. Mr. Splinter, the First Lieutenant, jumped from the gun he stood on—"Quartermaster, keep her away a bit"—and dived into the cabin to make his report.

Captain Deadeye was a staid, stiff-rumped, wall-eyed, old First-Lieutenantish-looking veteran, with his coat of a regular Rodney cut, broad skirts, long

waist, and stand-up collar, over which dangled either a queue, or a marlinspike with a tuft of oakum at the end of it,—it would have puzzled Old Nick to say which. His lower spars were cased in tight unmentionables of what had once been white kerseymere, and long boots, the coal-skuttle tops of which served as scuppers to carry off the drainings from his coat-flaps in bad weather; he was, in fact, the “last of the sea-monsters,” but, like all his tribe, as brave as steel—when put to it, as alert as a cat.

He no sooner heard Splinter's report, than he sprung up the ladder, brushing the tumbler of swizzle he had just brewed clean out of the fiddle into the lap of Mr. Saveall, the purser, who had dined with him, and nearly extinguishing the said purser, by his arm striking the bowl of the pipe he was smoking, thereby forcing the shank half way down his throat.—“My glass, Wilson,” to his steward.—“She is close to, sir; you can see her plainly without it,” said Mr. Treenail, the Second Lieutenant, from the weather nettings, where he was reconnoitring. After a long look through his starboard blinker, (his other skylight had been shut up ever since Aboukir,) Deadeye gave orders to “clear away the weather-bow gun;” and as it was now getting too dark for flags to be seen distinctly, he desired that three lanterns might be got ready for hoisting vertically in the main-rigging.—“All ready forward there?”—“All ready, sir.”—“Then hoist away the lights, and throw a shot across her forefoot—Fire!” Bang went our carronade, but our friend to windward paid no regard to the private signal; he had shaken a reef out of his topsails, and was coming down fast upon us,

It was clear that old Blowhard had at first taken him for one of our own cruisers, and meant to *signalize* him, "all regular and ship-shape," to use his own expression; most of us, however, thought it would have been wiser to have made sail, and widened our distance a little, in place of bothering with old-fashioned manœuvres, which might end in our catching a tartar; but the skipper had been all his life in line-of-battle ships, or heavy frigates; and it was a tough job, under any circumstances, to persuade him of the propriety of "up-stick, and-away," as we soon felt to our cost.

The enemy, for such he evidently was, now all at once yawed, and indulged us with a sight of his teeth; and there he was, fifteen ports of a side on his main-deck, with the due quantum of carronades on his quarter-deck and fore-castle; whilst his short lower masts, white canvass, and the tremendous hoist in his topsails, showed him to be a heavy American frigate; and it was equally certain that he had cleverly hooked us under his lee, within comfortable range of his long twenty-fours. To convince the most unbelieving, three jets of flame, amidst wreaths of white smoke, glanced from his main-deck; but in this instance, the sound of the cannon was followed by a sharp crackle and a shower of splinters from the foreyard.

It was clear we had got an ugly customer—poor Jenkins now called to Treenail, who was standing forward near the gun which had been fired—"Och, sir, and its badly wounded we are here." The officer was a Patlander, as well as the seaman. "Which of you, my boy?"—the growing seriousness of the affair in no way checking his propensity to fun,—

"Which of you—you, or the yard?"—"Both of us, your honour; but the yard badliest."—"The devil!—Come down, then, or get into the top, and I will have you looked after presently." The poor fellow crawled off the yard into the foretop, as he was ordered, where he was found after the brush, badly wounded by a splinter in the breast.

Jonathan, no doubt, "calculated," as well he might, that this taste of his quality would be quite sufficient for a little 18-gun sloop close under his lee; but the fight was not to be so easily taken out of Deadeye, although even to his optic, it was now high time to be off."

"All hands make sail, Mr. Splinter; that chap is too heavy for us.—Mr. Kelson," to the carpenter, "jump up and see what the foreyard will carry. Keep her away, my man," to the seaman at the helm;—"Crack on, Mr. Splinter—shake all the reefs out;—set the fore-topsail, and loose top-gallant sails;—stand by to sheet home, and see all clear to rig the booms out, if the breeze lulls."

In less than a minute we were bowling along before it; but the wind was breezing up again, and no one could say how long the wounded foreyard would carry the weight and drag of the sails. To mend the matter, Jonathan was coming up, hand over hand, with the freshening breeze, under a press of canvass; it was clear that escape was next to impossible.

"Clear away the larboard guns!" I absolutely jumped off the deck with astonishment—who could have spoken it? It appeared such downright madness to show fight under the very muzzles of the guns of an enemy, half of whose broadside was sufficient to sink

us. It was the Captain, however, and there was nothing for it.

In an instant was heard, through the whistling of the breeze, the creaking and screaming of the carronade slides, the rattling of the carriage of the long twelve-pounder amidships, the thumping and punching of handspikes, and the dancing and jumping of Jack himself, as the guns were being shotted and run out. In a few seconds all was still again, but the rushing sound of the vessel going through the water, and of the rising gale amongst the rigging.

The men stood clustered at their quarters, their cutlasses buckled round their waists, all without jackets and waistcoats, and many with nothing but their trowsers on.

"Now, men, mind your aim; our only chance is to wing him. I will yaw the ship, and as your guns come to bear, slap it right into his bows.—Starboard your helm, my man, and bring her to the wind." As she came round, blaze went our carronades and long-gun in succession, with good will and good aim, and down came his foretop-sail on the cap, with all the superincumbent spars and gear; the head of the topmost had been shot away. The men instinctively cheered. "That will do; now knock off, my boys, and let us run for it. Keep her away again; make all sail.

Jonathan was, for an instant, paralyzed by our impudence; but just as we were getting before the wind, he yawed, and let drive his whole broadside; and fearfully did it transmogrify us. Half an hour before, we were as gay a little sloop as ever floated, with a crew of 120 as fine fellows as ever manned a British man-

of-war. The iron-shower sped—ten of the hundred and twenty never saw the sun rise again; seventeen more were wounded, three mortally; we had eight shot between wind and water, our main-topmast shot away as clean as a carrot, and our hull and rigging otherwise regularly cut to pieces. Another broadside succeeded; but by this time we had bore up, thanks to the loss of our after-sail; we could do nothing else; and, what was better luck still, whilst the loss of our main-topmast paid the brig off on the one hand, the loss of head-sail in the frigate brought her as quickly to the wind on the other; thus, most of her shot fell astern of us; and, before she could bear up again in chase, the squall struck her, and carried her main-topmast overboard.

This gave us a start, crippled and bedevilled though we were; and as the night fell, we contrived to lose sight of our large friend. With breathless anxiety did we carry on through that night, expecting every lurch to send our remaining topmast by the board; but the weather moderated, and next morning the sun shone on our blood-stained decks, at anchor off the entrance to St. George's harbour.

CHAPTER II.

THE CRUISE OF H. M. S. TORCH—CONTINUED.

I WAS the mate of the morning watch, and, as day dawned, I had amused myself with other youngers over the side, examining the shot holes and other injuries sustained from the fire of the frigate, and contrasting the clean, sharp, well-defined apertures, made by the twenty-four-pound shot from the long guns, with the bruised and splintered ones from the thirty-two-pound carronades; but the men had begun to wash down the decks, and the first gush of clotted blood and water from the scuppers fairly turned me sick. I turned away, when Mr. Kennedy, our gunner, a good steady old Scotchman, with whom I was a bit of a favourite, came up to me—"Mr. Cringle, the Captain has sent for you; poor Mr. Johnstone is fast going: he wants to see you."

I knew my young messmate had been wounded, for I had seen him carried below after the frigate's second broadside; but the excitement of a boy, who had never smelled powder fired in anger before, had kept me on deck the whole night, and it never once occurred to me to ask for him, until the old gunner spoke.

I hastened down to our small confined birth, and there I saw a sight that quickly brought me to myself. Poor Johnstone was, indeed, going; a grape shot had struck him, and torn his belly open. There he lay, in his bloody hammock, on the deck, pale and motionless as if he had already departed, except a slight twitching at the corners of his mouth, and a convulsive contraction and distension of his nostrils. His brown ringlets still clustered over his marble forehead, but they were drenched in the cold sweat of death. The surgeon could do nothing for him, and had left him; but our old Captain—bless him for it—I little expected, from his usual crusty bearing, to find him so employed—had knelt by his side, and, whilst he read from the prayer-book, one of those beautiful petitions in our church service, to Almighty God, for mercy to the passing soul of one so young, and so early cut off, the tears trickled down the old man's cheeks, and filled the furrows worn in them by the washing up of many a salt spray. On the other side of his narrow bed, fomenting the rigid muscles of his neck and chest, sat Mishtress Connolly, one of three women on board—a rough enough creature, heaven knows, in common weather; but her stifled sobs showed that the mournful sight had stirred up all the woman within her. She had opened the bosom of the poor boy's shirt, and, untying the riband that fastened a small gold crucifix round his neck, she placed it in his cold hand. The young midshipman was of a respectable family in Limerick, her native place, and a Catholic—another strand of the cord that bound her to him. When the Captain finished reading, he bent over the departing youth, and kissed his cheek.

"Your young messmate just now desired to see you, Mr. Cringle; but it is too late, he is insensible and dying." Whilst he spoke, a strong shiver passed through the boy's frame, his face became slightly convulsed, and all was over! The Captain rose, and Connolly, with a delicacy of feeling which many might not have looked for in her situation, spread one of her clean mess table-cloths over the body. "And is it really gone you are, my poor dear boy!" forgetting all difference of rank in the fulness of her heart. "Who will tell this to your mother, and nobody here to wake you but old Kate Connolly, and no time will they be giving me, nor whiskey—Ochon! ochon!"

But enough and to spare of this piping work. The boatswain whistle now called me to the gangway, to superintend the handing up, from a shore boat alongside, a supply of the grand staples of the island—ducks and onions. The three 'Mudians in her were characteristic samples of the inhabitants. Their faces and skins, where exposed, were not tanned, but absolutely burnt into a fiery-red colour by the sun. They guessed and drawled like any buckskin from Virginia, superadding to their accomplishments their insular peculiarity of always shutting one eye when they spoke to you. They are all Yankees at bottom; and if they could get their three hundred and sixty-five *Islands*—so they call the large stones on which they live—under weigh, they would not be long in towing them into the Chesapeake.

The word had been passed to get six of the larboard guns and all the shot over to the other side, to give the brig a list of a streak or two astarboard, so that the stage on which the carpenter and his crew were

at work over the side, stopping the shot holes about the water line, might swing clear of the wash of the sea. I had jumped from the nettings, where I was perched, to assist in unbolting one of the carronade slides, when I slipped and capsized against a peg sticking out of one of the scuppers. I took it for something else, and damned the ring-bolt incontinently. Caboose, the cook, was passing with his mate, a Jamaica negro of the name of Johncrow at the time. "Don't damn the remains of your fellow-mortals, Master Cringle; that is my leg." The cook of a man-of-war is no small beer, he is his Majesty's warrant officer; a much bigger wig than a poor little mid, with whom it is condescension on his part to jest.

It seems to be a sort of rule, that an old sailor who has not lost a limb, or an eye at least, shall be eligible to the office; but as the kind of maiming is so far circumscribed that all cooks must have two arms, a laughable proportion of them have but one leg. Besides the honour, the perquisites are good; accordingly, all old quartermasters, captains of tops, &c., look forward to the cookdom, as the cardinals look to the popedom; and really there is some analogy between them, for neither are preferred from any especial fitness for the office. A cardinal is made pope because he is old, infirm, and imbecile,—our friend, Caboose, was made cook because he had been Lord Nelson's coxwain, was a drunken rascal, and had a wooden leg; for, as to his gastronomical qualifications, he knew no more of the science than just sufficient to watch the copper where the salt junk and potatoes were boiling. Having been a little in the wind over-

night, he had quartered himself, in the superabundance of his heroism, at a gun where he had no business to be, and in running it out, he had jammed his toe in a scupper hole, so fast that there was no extricating him; and, notwithstanding his piteous entreaty "to be eased out handsomely, as the leg was made out of a plank of the Victory, and the ring at the end out of one of her bolts," the captain of the gun finding, after a stout pull, that the man was like to come "home in his hand *without* the leg," was forced "to break him short off," as he phrased it, to get him out of the way, and let the carriage traverse. In the morning when he sobered, he had quite forgotten where the leg was, and how he broke it; he, therefore, got Kelson to splice the stump with the but-end of a mop; but, in the hurry, it had been left three inches too long, so he had to jerk himself up to the top of his peg at every step. The Doctor, glad to breathe the fresh air after the horrible work he had gone through, was leaning over the side speaking to Kelson. When I fell, he turned round and drew Cookee's fire on himself. "Doctor, you have not prescribed for me yet."—"No, Caboose, I have not; what is wrong?"—"Wrong, sir? why, I have lost my leg, and the Captain's clerk says I am not in the Return!—Look here, sir, had Dr. Kelson not coopered me, where should I have been?—Why, Doctor, had I been looked after, amputation might have been unnecessary; a *fish* might have done, whereas, I have had to be *spliced*." He was here cut short by the voice of his mate, who had gone forward to slay a pig for the gunroom mess. "Oh, lad, oh!—Massa, Caboose!—Dem dam Yankee!—De Purser killed, mas-

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sa!—Dem shoot him troo de head!—Oh, lad!” Captain Deadeye had come on deck. “You, Johncrow, what is wrong with you?”—“Why, de Purser killed, Captain, dat all.”—“Purser killed?—Doctor, is Save-all hurt?” Treenail could stand it no longer. “No, sir, no; it is one of the gunroom pigs that we shipped at Halifax three cruises ago; I am sure I don’t know how he survived one, but the seamen took a fancy to him, and nick-named him the Purser. You know, sir, they make pets of any thing, and every thing, at a pinch!”

Here Johncrow drew the carcass from the hog-pen, and sure enough a shot had cut the poor Purser’s head nearly off. Blackee looked at him with a most whimsical expression; they say no one can fathom a negro’s affection for a pig. “Poor Purser! de people call him Purser, sir, becaase him knowing chap; him cabbage all de grub, slush, and stuff in him own corner, and give only de small bit, and de bad piece, to de oder pig; so, Captain”—Splinter saw the poor fellow was like to get into a scrape. “That will do, Johncrow—forward with you now, and lend a hand to cat the anchor.—All hands up anchor!” The boatswain’s hoarse voice repeated the command, and he in turn was re-echoed by his mates; the capstan was manned, and the crew stamped round to a point of war most villanously performed by a bad drummer and a worse fifer, in as high glee as if those who were killed had been snug and well in their hammocks on the berth-deck, in place of at the bottom of the sea, with each a shot at his feet. We weighed, and began to work up, tack and tack, towards the island of Ireland, where the arsenal is, amongst a perfect labyrinth of

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shoals, through which the 'Mudian pilot *cunned* the ship with great skill, taking his stand, to our no small wonderment, not at the gangway or poop, as usual, but on the bowsprit end, so that he might see the rocks under foot, and shun them accordingly, for they are so steep and numerous, (they look like large fish in the clear water,) and the channel is so intricate, that you have to go quite close to them. At noon we arrived at the anchorage, and hauled our moorings on board.

CHAPTER III.

HEAT AND THIRST,—A SCENE IN JAMAICA.

THE Torch was lying at anchor in Bluefield's Bay. It was between eight and nine in the morning. The land wind had died away, and the sea-breeze had not set in—there was not a breath stirring. The pennant from the mast-head fell sluggishly down, and clung amongst the rigging like a dead snake, whilst the folds of the St. George's ensign that hung from the mizen-peak, were as motionless as if they had been carved in marble.

The anchorage was one unbroken mirror, except where its glasslike surface was shivered into sparkling ripples by the gambols of a skipjack, or the flashing stoop of his enemy the pelican; and the reflection of the vessel was so clear and steady, that at the distance of a cable's length you could not distinguish the water-line, nor tell where the substance ended and shadow began, until the casual dashing of a bucket overboard for a few moments broke up the phantom ship; but the wavering fragments soon reunited, and she again floated double, like the swan of the poet. The heat was so intense, that the iron stanchions of the awning could not be grasped with

the hand, and where the decks were not screened by it, the pitch boiled out from the seams. The swell rolled in from the offing in long shining undulations, like a sea of quicksilver, whilst every now and then a flying fish would spark out from the unruffled bosom of the heaving water, and shoot away like a silver arrow, until it dropped with a flash into the sea again. There was not a cloud in the heavens, but a quivering blue haze hung over the land, through which the white sugar-works and overseers' houses, on the distant estates, appeared to twinkle like objects seen through a thin smoke, whilst each of the tall stems of the cocoa-nut trees on the beach, when looked at steadfastly, seemed to be turning round with a small spiral motion, like so many endless screws. There was a dreamy indistinctness about the outlines of the hills, even in the immediate vicinity, which increased as they receded, until the blue mountains in the horizon melted into sky. The crew were listlessly spinning oakum, and mending sails, under the shade of the awning; the only exceptions to the general languor were Johncrow the black, and Jackoo the monkey. The former (who was an *improvisatore* of a rough stamp) sat out on the bowsprit, through choice, beyond the shade of the canvass, without hat or shirt, like a bronze bust, busy with his task, whatever that might be, singing at the top of his pipe, and between whiles confabulating with his hairy ally, as if he had been a messmate. The monkey was hanging by the tail from the dolphin-striker, admiring what Johncrow called "his own black ogly face in de water."—"Tail like yours would be good ting for a sailor, Jackoo, it would leave his two hands free aloft—more

use, more hornament too, I'm sure, den-de piece of greasy junk dat hangs from de Captain's taffril.— Now I shall sing to you, how dat Corromantee rascal, my fader, was sell me on de Gold Coast."

"Two red nightcap, one long knife,
All him get for Quackoo,
For gun next day him sell him wife—
You tink dat good song, Jackoo?"

"Chocko, chocko," chattered the monkey, as if in answer. "Ah, you tink so—sensible honimal!—What is dat? shark!—Jackoo, come up, sir: don't you see dat big shovel-nosed fish looking at you? Pull your hand out of the water, I say, Jackoo!" The negro threw himself on the gammoning of the bowsprit to take hold of the poor ape, who mistaking his kind intention, and ignorant of his danger, shrunk from him, lost his hold, and fell into the sea. The shark instantly sank to have a run, then dashed at his prey, raising his snout over him, and shooting his head and shoulders three or four feet out of the water, with poor Jackoo shrieking in his jaws, whilst his small bones crackled and crunched under the monster's triple row of teeth.

Whilst this small tragedy was acting—and painful enough it was to the kind-hearted negro—I was looking out towards the eastern horizon, watching the first dark-blue ripple of the sea-breeze, when a rushing noise passed over my head.

I looked up and saw a *gallinazo*, the large carrion-crow of the tropics, sailing, contrary to the habits of its kind, seaward over the brig. I followed it with my eye, until it vanished in the distance, when my

attention was attracted by a dark speck far out in the offing, with a little tiny white sail. With my glass I made it out to be a ship's boat, but I saw no one on board, and the sail was idly flapping about the mast.

On making my report, I was desired to pull towards it in the gig; and as we approached, one of the crew said he thought he saw some one peering over the bow. We drew nearer, and I saw him distinctly. "Why don't you haul the sheet aft, and come down to us, sir?"

He neither moved nor answered, but, as the boat rose and fell on the short sea raised by the first of the breeze, the face kept mopping and mowing at us over the gunwale.

"I will soon teach you manners, my fine fellow! give way, men"—and I fired my musket, when the crow that I had seen rose from the boat into the air, but immediately alighted again, to our astonishment, vulture-like with outstretched wings, *upon the head*.

Under the shadow of this horrible plume, the face seemed on the instant to alter like a hideous change in a dream. It appeared to become of a deathlike paleness, and anon streaked with blood. Another stroke of the oar—the chin had fallen down, and the tongue was hanging out. Another pull—the eyes were gone, and from their sockets, brains and blood were fermenting, and flowing down the cheeks. It was the face of a putrefying corpse. In this floating coffin we found the body of another sailor, doubled across one of the thwarts, with a long Spanish knife sticking between his ribs, as if he had died in some mortal struggle, or, what was equally probable, had put an end to himself in his frenzy; whilst along the

bottom of the boat, arranged with some show of care, and covered by a piece of canvass stretched across an oar above it, lay the remains of a beautiful boy, about fourteen years of age, apparently but a few hours dead. Some biscuit, a roll of jerked beef, and an earthen water-jar, lay beside him, showing that hunger, at least, could have had no share in his destruction,—*but the pipkin was dry, and the small water-cask in the bow was stowed, and empty.*

We had no sooner cast our grappling over the bow, and begun to tow the boat to the ship, than the abominable bird that we had scared settled down into it again, notwithstanding our proximity, and began to peck at the face of the dead boy. At this moment we heard a gibbering noise, and saw something like a bundle of old rags roll out from beneath the stern-sheet, and apparently make a fruitless attempt to drive the gallinazo from its prey. Who can imagine what an object met our eyes! It was a full-grown man, but so wasted, that one of the boys lifted him by his belt with one hand. His knees were drawn up to his chin, his hands were like the talons of a bird, while the falling in of his chocolate-coloured and withered features gave an unearthly relief to his forehead, over which the horny and transparent skin was braced so tightly that it seemed ready to crack. But in the midst of this desolation, his deep-set coal-black eyes sparkled like two diamonds with the fever of his sufferings; there was a fearful fascination in their flashing brightness, contrasted with the death-like aspect of the face, and the rigidity of the frame. When sensible of our presence, he tried to speak, but could only utter a low moaning sound. At length—

"Aqua, aqua"—we had not a drop of water in the boat. "El muchacho esta moriendo de sed—Aqua."

We got on board, and the surgeon gave the poor fellow some weak tepid grog. It acted like magic. He gradually uncoiled himself, his voice, from being weak and husky, became comparatively strong and clear. "El hijo—Aqua para mi pedrillo—No le hace para mi—Oh la noche pasado, la noche pasado!" He was told to compose himself, and that his boy would be taken care of. "Dexa me verlo entonces, oh Dios, dexa me verlo"—and he crawled, grovelling on his chest, like a crushed worm across the deck, until he got his head over the port-sill, and looked down into the boat. He there beheld the pale face of his dead son; it was the last object he ever saw—"Ay de mi!" he groaned heavily, and dropped his face against the ship's side—He was dead.

CHAPTER IV.

DAVY JONES AND THE YANKEE PRIVATEER.

WE had refitted, and been four days at sea, on our voyage to Jamaica, when the gun-room officers gave our mess a blowout.

The increased motion and rushing of the vessel through the water, the groaning of the masts, the howling of the rising gale, and the frequent trampling of the watch on deck, were prophetic of wet jackets to some of us; still, midshipmanlike, we were as happy as a good dinner and some wine could make us, until the old gunner shoved his weatherbeaten phiz and bald pate in at the door. "Beg pardon, Mr. Splinter, but if you will spare Mr. Cringle on the forecastle for an hour until the moon rises."—"Spare," quotha, "is his majesty's officer a joint stool?"—"Why, Mr. Kennedy, why? here, man, take a glass of grog."—"I thank you, sir. It is coming on a roughish night, sir; the running ships should be crossing us hereabouts; indeed, more than once I thought there was a strange sail close aboard of us, the scud is flying so low, and in such white flakes; and none of us have an eye like Mr. Cringle, unless it be Johncrow, and he is all but frozen."—

“ Well, Tom, I suppose you *will* go ”—Anglice, from a first lieutenant to a mid—“ Brush instanter.”

Having changed my uniform, for shag-trowsers, pea-jacket, and south-west cap, I went forward, and took my station, in no pleasant humour, on the stowed jib, with my arm round the stay. I had been half an hour there, the weather was getting worse, the rain was beating in my face, and the spray from the stem was flashing over me, as it roared through the waste of sparkling and hissing waters. I turned my back to the weather for a moment, to press my hand on my strained eyes. When I opened them, I saw the gunner's gaunt high-featured visage thrust anxiously forward; his profile looked as if rubbed over with phosphorus, and his whole person as if we had been playing at snap dragon. “ What has come over you, Mr. Kennedy?—who is burning the bluelight now?”—“ A wiser man than I must tell you that; look forward, Mr. Cringle—look there; what do your books say to that?”

I looked forth, and saw, at the extreme end of the jib-boom, what I had read of, certainly, but never expected to see, a pale, greenish, glow-worm coloured flame, of the size and shape of the frosted glass shade over the swinging lamp in the gun-room. It drew out and flattened as the vessel pitched and rose again, and as she sheered about it, wavered round the point that seemed to attract it, like a soapsud bubble blown from a tobacco pipe, before it is shaken into the air; at the core it was comparatively bright, but faded into a halo. It shed a baleful and ominous light on the surrounding objects; the group of sailors on the fore-castle looked like spectres, and they shrunk together, and

whispered when it began to roll slowly along the spar towards where the boatswain was sitting at my feet. At this instant something slid down the stay, and a cold clammy hand passed round my neck. I was within an ace of losing my hold, and tumbling overboard. "Heaven have mercy on me, what's that?"—"It's that skylarking son of a gun, Jem Sparkle's monkey, sir. You, Jem, you'll never rest till that brute is made shark bait of." But Jackoo vanished up the stay again, chuckling and grinning in the ghostly radiance, as if he had been the "Spirit of the Lamp." The light was still there, but a cloud of mist, like a burst of vapour from a steam boiler, came down upon the gale, and flew past, when it disappeared. I followed the white mass as it sailed down the wind; it did not, as it appeared to me, vanish in the darkness, but seemed to remain in sight to leeward, as if checked by a sudden flaw; yet none of our sails were taken aback. A thought flashed on me. I peered still more intensely into the night. I was now certain. "A sail, broad on the lee-bow." The ship was in a buz in a moment. The captain answered from the quarter-deck—"Thank you, Mr. Cringle. How shall we steer?"—"Keep her away a couple of points, sir, steady."—"Steady," sung the man at the helm; and a slow melancholy cadence, although a familiar sound to me, now moaned through the rushing of the wind, and smote upon my heart as if it had been the wailing of a spirit. I turned to the boatswain, who was now standing beside me—"Is that you or Davy steering, Mr. Nipper? if you had not been there bodily at my elbow, I could have sworn that was your voice." When the gunner made the

same remark, it startled the poor fellow; he tried to take it as a joke, but could not. "There may be a laced hammock with a shot in it, for some of us ere morning."

At this moment, to my dismay, the object we were chasing, shortened,—gradually fell abeam of us, and finally disappeared. "The Flying Dutchman."—"I can't see her at all now."—"She will be a fore-and-aft-rigged vessel that has tacked, sir." And sure enough, after a few seconds, I saw the white object lengthen, and draw out again abaft our beam. "The chase has tacked, sir, put the helm down, or she will go to windward of us." We tacked also, and time it was we did so, for the rising moon now showed us a large schooner under a crowd of sail. We edged down on her, when finding her manœuvre detected, she brailed up her flat sails, and bore up before the wind. This was our best point of sailing, and we cracked on, the captain rubbing his hands—"It's my turn to be the big un this time." Although blowing a strong northwester, it was now clear moonlight, and we hammered away from our bow guns, but whenever a shot told amongst the rigging, the injury was repaired as if by magic. It was evident we had repeatedly hulled her, from the glimmering white streaks along her counter and across her stern, occasioned by the splintering of the timber, but it seemed to produce no effect.

At length we drew well up on her quarter. She continued all black hull and white sail, not a soul to be seen on deck, except a dark object, which we took for the man at the helm. "What schooner's that?" No answer. "Heave to, or I'll sink you." Still

all silent. "Sergeant Armstrong, do you think you could pick off that chap at the wheel?" The marine jumped on the forecastle, and levelled his piece, when a musket-shot from the schooner crashed through his skull, and he fell dead. The old skipper's blood was up. "Forecastle there! Mr. Nipper, clap a canister of grape over the round shot, into the boat gun, and give it to him."—"Aye, aye, sir!" gleefully rejoined the boatswain, forgetting the augury and every thing else in the excitement of the moment. In a twinkling, the square foresail—topgallant—royal—and studding-sail halyards were let go by the run on board of the schooner, as if they had been shot away, and he put his helm hard aport as if to round to. "Rake him, sir, or give him the stern. He has *not* surrendered.—I know their game. Give him your broadside, sir, or he is off to windward of you like a shot. No, no, we have him now; heave to, Mr. Splinter, heave to!" We did so, and that so suddenly, that the studding-sail booms snapped like pipe shanks, short off by the irons. Notwithstanding we had shot two hundred yards to the leeward before we could lay our maintopsail to the mast. I ran to windward. The schooner's yards and rigging were now black with men, clustered like bees swarming, her square sails were being close furled, her fore and aft sails set, and away she was dead to windward of us. "So much for undervaluing our American friends," grumbled Mr. Splinter.

We made all sail in chase, blazing away to little purpose; we had no chance on a bowline, and when our "Amigo," had satisfied himself of his superiority by one or two short tacks, he deliberately took a reef

in his mainsail, hauled down his flying jib and gaff topsail, triced up the bunt of his foresail, and fired his long thirty-two at us. The shot came in at the third aftermost port on the starboard side, and dismounted the carronade, smashing the slide, and wounding three men. The second shot missed, and as it was madness to remain to be peppered, probably winged, whilst every one of ours fell short, we reluctantly kept away on our course, having the gratification of hearing a clear well-blown bugle on board the schooner play up "Yankee Doodle." As the brig fell off, our long gun was run out to have a parting crack at her, when the third and last shot from the schooner struck the sill of the midship port, and made the white splinters fly from the solid oak like bright silver sparks in the moonlight. A sharp piercing cry rose into the air—my soul identified the death-shriek with the voice that I had heard, and I saw the man, who was standing with the lanyard of the lock in his hand, drop heavily across the breech, and discharge the gun in his fall. Thereupon a blood-red glare shot up into the cold blue sky, as if a volcano had burst forth from beneath the mighty deep, followed by a roar, and a shattering crash, and a mingling of unearthly cries and groans, and a concussion of the air, and of the water, as if our whole broadside had been fired at once. Then a solitary splash here, and a dip there, and short sharp yells, and low choking bubbling moans, as the hissing fragments of the noble vessel we had seen fell into the sea, and the last of her gallant crew vanished for ever beneath that pale broad moon. *We were alone*, and once more all was dark, and wild, and stormy. Fearfully had that ball sped,

fired by a dead man's hand. But what is it that clings black and doubled across that fatal cannon, dripping and heavy, and choking the scuppers with clotting gore, and swaying to and fro with the motion of the vessel, like a bloody fleece? "Who is it that was hit at the gun there?"—"Mr. Nipper, the boatswain, sir. The last shot has cut him in two."

CHAPTER V.

THE QUENCHING OF THE TORCH.

“LOOK out for that sea, quarter-master!—Mind your starboard helm!—Ease her, man—ease her.”

On it came rolling as high as the foreyard, and tumbled in over the bows, green, clear, and unbroken.

It filled the deep waist of the Torch in an instant, and as I rose half smothered in the midst of a jumble of men, pigs, hencoops, and spare spars, I had nearly lost an eye by a floating boarding-pike that was lanced at me by the *jaugle* of the water. As for the boats on the booms, they had all gone to sea separately, and were bobbing at us in a squadron to leeward, the launch acting as commodore, with a crew of a dozen sheep, whose bleating, as she rose on the crest of a wave, came back upon us, faintly blending with the hoarse roaring of the storm, and seeming to cry, “No more mutton for you, my boys!”

At length the lee ports were forced out—the pumps promptly rigged and manned—buckets slung and at work down the hatchways; and although we had narrowly escaped being swamped, and it continued to blow hard, with a heavy sea, the men, confident in

the *bronze ornament* there (pointing to the Indian) for an assistant.

Here he looked towards the body; and the honest fellow's voice shook as he continued.

"But seeing you were alive, I thought if you did recover, it would be gratifying to both of us, after having weathered it so long with him through gale and sunshine, to lay the kind-hearted old man's head on its everlasting pillow as decently as our forlorn condition permitted."

As the Lieutenant spoke, Sneezer seemed to think his watch was up, and drew off towards the fire. Clung and famished, the poor brute could no longer resist the temptation, but making a desperate snatch at the joint, bolted through the door with it, hotly pursued by the *Bull-frog*.

"Drop the leg of mutton, Sneezer," roared the Lieutenant, "drop the mutton—drop it, sir, drop it, drop it"——

THOMAS CRINGLE.

17th September, 1830.

CHAPTER VI.

A SCENE ON THE "COSTA FIRME."

I WAS awakened by the low growling, and short bark of the dog. The night was far spent; the tiny sparks of the fire-flies that were glancing in the doorway, began to grow pale; the chirping of the cricket and lizard, and the *snore* of the tree-toad waxed fainter, and the wild cry of the tiger-cat was no longer heard. The *terral*, or land-wind, which is usually strongest towards morning, moaned loudly on the hill-side, and came rushing past with a melancholy *sough*, through the brushwood that surrounded the hut, shaking off the heavy dew from the palm and cocoa-nut trees, like large drops of rain.

The hollow tap of the wood-pecker; the clear flute note of the *Pavo del monte*; the discordant shriek of the macau; the shrill chirr of the wild Guinea fowl; and the chattering of the paroquets began to be heard from the wood. The ill-omened *gallinaso* was sailing and circling round the hut, and the tall flamingo was stalking on the shallows of the lagoon, the haunt of the disgusting alligator, that lay beneath, divided

from the sea by a narrow mud bank, where a group of pelicans, perched on the wreck of one of our boats, were pluming themselves before taking wing. In the east, the deep blue of the firmament, from which the lesser stars were fast fading, all but the "Eye of Morn," was warming into the magnificent purple, and the amber rays of the yet unrisen sun were shooting up, streamer-like, with intervals between, through the parting clouds, as they broke away with a passing shower, that fell like a veil of silver gauze between us and the first primrose-coloured streaks of a tropical dawn.

"That's a musket shot," said the Lieutenant. The Indian crept on his stomach to the door, dropped his chin on the ground, and placed his open palms behind his ears. The distant wail of a bugle was heard, then three or four dropping shots again, in rapid succession. Mr. Splinter stooped to go forth, but the Indian caught him by the leg, uttering the single word, "*Espanole*."

On the instant, a young Indian woman, with a shrieking infant in her arms, rushed to the door. There was a blue gunshot wound in her neck, from which two or three large black clotting gouts of blood were trickling. Her long black hair was streaming in coarse braid, and her features were pinched and sharpened, as if in the agony of death. She glanced wildly, and gasped out "*Escapa, Oreeque, escapa, para mi soi, muerto ya*." Another shot, and the miserable creature convulsively clasped her child, whose small shrill cry I often fancy I hear to this hour, blending with its mother's death-shriek, and, falling

backwards, rolled over the brow of the hill out of sight. The ball had pierced the heart of the parent through the body of her offspring. By this time, a party of Spanish soldiers had surrounded the hut, one of whom kneeling before the low door, pointed his musket into it. The Indian, who had seen his wife and child thus cruelly shot down before his face, now fired his rifle, and the man fell dead. "*Siga mi Querida Bondia—Maldito.*" Then springing to his feet, and stretching himself to his full height, with his arms extended towards Heaven, while a strong shiver shook him like an ague fit, he yelled forth the last words he ever uttered, "*Venga la suerte, ya soi listo,*" and resumed his squatting position on the ground. Half a dozen musket balls were now fired at random through the wattles, while the Lieutenant, who spoke Spanish well, sung out lustily, that we were English officers who had been shipwrecked, "*Mentiri,*" growled the officer of the party, "Pirates, leagued with Indian bravoës; fire the hut, soldiers, and burn the scoundrels!" There was no time to be lost; Mr. Splinter made a vigorous attempt to get out, in which I seconded him, with all the strength that remained to me, but they beat us back again with the buts of their muskets.

"Where are your commissions, your uniforms, if you be British officers?"

We had neither, and our fate appeared inevitable.

The doorway was filled with brush-wood, fire was set to the hut, and we heard the crackling of the palm-thatch, while thick stifling wreaths of white smoke burst in upon us through the roof.

"Lend a hand, Tom, now or never, and kick up the dark man there."

But he sat still as a statue. We laid our shoulders to the end walls, and heaved at it with all our might; when we were nearly at the last gasp, it gave way, and we rushed headlong into the middle of the party, followed by Sneezzer with his shaggy coat, that was full of clots of tar blazing like a torch. He unceremoniously seized "*par le queue*," the soldier who had throttled me, setting fire to the skirts of his coat, and blowing up his cartouche box. I believe, under providence, that the ludicrousness of this attack saved us from being bayonneted on the spot. It gave time for Mr. Splinter to recover his breath, when, being a powerful man, he shook off the two soldiers who had seized him, and dashed into the burning hut again. I thought he was mad, especially when I saw him return with his clothes and hair on fire, dragging out the body of the Captain. He unfolded the sail it was wrapped in, and pointing to the remains of the naval uniform in which the mutilated and putrefying corpse was dressed, he said sternly to the officer,—“We are in your power, and you may murder us if you will; but that was my Captain four days ago, and you see, *he* at least was a British officer—satisfy yourself.” The person he addressed, a handsome young Spaniard, with a clear olive complexion, oval face, small brown mustachios, and large black eyes, shuddered at the horrible spectacle, but did as he was requested.

When he saw the crown and anchor, and his Majesty's cipher on the appointments of the dead officer,

he became convinced of our quality, and changed his tone—" *Es verdad son de la marina Inglesa;*"—" But, gentlemen, were there not three persons in the hut?" There were indeed—the flames had consumed the dry roof and wall with incredible rapidity, and by this time they had fallen in, but Oreeque was nowhere to be seen. I thought I saw something move in the midst of the fire, but it might have been fancy. Again the white ashes heaved, and a half consumed hand and arm were thrust through the smouldering mass, then a human head, with the scalp burnt from the skull, and the flesh from the chaps and cheek-bones; the trunk next appeared, the bleeding ribs laid bare, and the miserable Indian, with his ribs like scorched rafters, stood right before us, like a demon in the midst of the fire. He made no attempt to escape, but reeling to and fro like a drunken man, fell headlong, raising clouds of smoke and a shower of sparks in his fall! Alas! poor Oreeque, the newly rising sun was now shining on your ashes, and on the dead bodies of the ill-starred Boudia and her child, whose bones, ere his setting, the birds of the air, and beasts of the forest, will leave as white and fleshless as your own. The officer, who belonging to the army investing Carthage, now treated us with great civility; he heard our story, and desired his men to assist us in burying the remains of our late Commander.

We remained all day on the same part of the coast, but towards evening the party fell back on the outpost to which they belonged—after travelling an hour or so, we emerged from a dry river course, in which the night had overtaken us, and came suddenly on a

small plateau, where the post was established on the promontory of "Punto Canoa."

There may be braver soldiers at a charge, but none more picturesque in a *bivouac* than the Spanish. A gigantic wild cotton tree, to which our largest English oak, were but as dwarfs, rose on one side, and overshadowed the whole level space. The bright beams of the full moon glanced among the topmost leaves, and tipped the higher branches with silver, contrasting strangely with the scene below, where a large watch fire cast a strong red glare on the surrounding objects, throwing up dense volumes of smoke, which eddied in dun wreaths amongst the foliage, and hung in the still night air like a canopy, leaving the space beneath comparatively clear.

A temporary guard-house, with a rude veranda of bamboos and palm leaves, had been built between two of the immense spurs of the mighty tree, that shot out many yards from the parent stem like wooden buttresses, whilst overhead there was a sort of stage made of planks laid across the lower boughs, supporting a quantity of provisions covered with tarpaulins. The sentries in the back ground with their glancing arms, were seen pacing on their watch; some of the guard were asleep on wooden benches, and on the platform amongst the branches, where a little baboon-looking old man, in the dress of a drummer, had perched himself, and sat playing a Biscayan air on a sort of bagpipe; others were gathered round the fire, cooking their food or cleaning their arms.

It shone brightly on the long line of Spanish transports that were moored below, *stem* on to the beach,

and on the white sails of the armed craft that were still hovering under weigh in the offing, which, as the night wore on, stole in, one after another, like phantoms of the ocean, and letting go their anchors with a splash, and a hollow rattle of the cable, remained still and silent as the rest.

Farther off, it fell in a crimson stream on the surface of the sheltered bay, struggling with the light of the gentle moon, and tinging with blood the small waves that twinkled in her silver wake, across which a guard boat would now and then glide, like a fairy thing, the arms of the men flashing back the red light.

Beyond the influence of the hot smoky glare, the glorious planet reassumed her sway in the midst of her attendant stars, and the relieved eye wandering forth into the lovely night, where the noiseless sheet lightning was glancing, and ever and anon lighting up for an instant, some fantastic shape in the fleecy clouds, like prodigies forerunning the destruction of the strong-hold over which they impended; while beneath the lofty top of the convent-crowned Popa, the citadel of San Felipé, bristling with cannon, the white batteries and many towers of the fated city of Carthage, and the Spanish blockading squadron at anchor before it, slept in the moonlight.

We were civilly received by the Captain, who apologized for the discomfort under which we must pass the night. He gave us the best he had, and that was bad enough, both of food and wine, before showing us into the hut, where we found a rough deal coffin lying on the very bench that was to be

our bed. This he ordered away with all the coolness in the world. "It was only one of his people who had died that morning of *Vomito*, or Yellow Fever." "Comfortable country this," quoth Splinter, "and a pleasant morning we have had of it, Tom!"

CHAPTER VII.

CATCHING WILD DUCKS, &c.

NEXT morning, we proceeded towards the Spanish head-quarters, provided with horses through the kindness of the Captain of the outposts, and preceded by a guide on an ass. He was a *moreno*, or a man of colour, who, in place of bestriding his beast, gathered his limbs under him, and sat cross-legged on it like a tailor; so that when you saw the two "end on," the effect was laughable enough, the flank and tail of the ass appearing to constitute the lower part of the man, as if he had been a sort of composite animal, like the ancient satyr. The road traversed a low swampy country, from which the rank moisture arose in a hot palpable mist, and crossed several shallow lagoons, from two to six feet deep of tepid, muddy, brackish water, some of them half a mile broad, and swarming with wild water fowl. On these occasions, our friend, the Satyr, was signalled to make sail ahead on his donkey to pilot us; and as the water deepened, he would betake himself to swimming in its wake, holding on by the tail, and shouting, "*Cuidado Burrico, Cuidado que no te ahogas.*"

While passing through the largest of these, we noticed several calabashes about pistol-shot on our right; and as we fancied one of them bobbed now and then, it struck me they might be Indian fishing-floats. To satisfy my curiosity, I hauled my wind, and leaving the track we were on, swam my horse towards the group. The two first that I lifted had nothing attached to them, but proved to be what I thought they were, merely empty gourds floating before the wind; but when I tried to seize the largest, it eluded my grasp in a most incomprehensible manner, and slid away astern of me with a curious hollow gabbling sort of noise, whereupon my palfrey snorted and reared, and nearly capsized me over his bows. What a noble fish, thought I, as I tacked in chase, but my Bucephalus refused to face it. I therefore bore up to join my companions again; but in requital of the disappointment, smashed the gourd in passing with the stick I held in my hand, when, to my unutterable surprise, and amidst shouts of laughter from our *moreno*, the head and shoulders of an Indian, with a quantity of sedges tied round his neck, and buoyed up by half a dozen dead teal fastened by the legs to his girdle, started up before me. "*Ave Maria, purissima!* you have broken my head, *senor*." But as the vegetable helmet had saved his scull, of itself possibly none of the softest, a small piece of money spliced the feud between us; and as he fitted his pate with another calabash, preparatory to resuming his cruise, he joined in our merriment, although from a different cause.—"What *can* these English simpletons see so very comical in a poor Indian catching wild ducks?"

Shortly after, we entered a forest of magnificent trees, whose sombre shade, on first passing from the intolerable glare of the sun, seemed absolute darkness. The branches were alive with innumerable tropical birds and insects, and were laced together by a thick tracery of withes, along which a guana would occasionally dart, coming nearest of all the reptiles I had seen to the shape of the fabled dragon.

But how different from the clean stems, and beautiful green sward of our English woods! Here, you were confined to a quagmire by impervious under-wood of prickly pear, penguin, and speargrass; and when we rode under the drooping branches of the trees, that the leaves might brush away the halo of mosquitoes, flying ants, and other winged plagues that buzzed about our temples, we found, to our dismay, that we had made bad worse by the introduction of a whole colony of *garapatos*, or wood-ticks, into our eyebrows and hair. At length we reached the head-quarters at Torrecilla, and were well received by the Spanish Commander-in-chief, a tall, good-looking, soldier-like man, whose personal qualities had an excellent foil in the captain-general of the province, whom at first I took for a dancing-master, or, at the best, *perruquier en general* to the staff.

After being furnished with food and raiment, we retired to our *quatre*s, a most primitive sort of couch, being a simple wooden frame, with a piece of canvass stretched over it. However, if we had no mattresses, we had none of the disagreeables often incidental to them, and fatigue proved a good opiate; for we slept soundly until the drums and trumpets of the troops, getting under arms, awoke us at daylight. The army

was under weigh to occupy Carthagena, which had fallen through famine, and we had no choice but to accompany it.

I knew nothing of the misery of a siege but by description; the reality even to me, case-hardened as I was by my own recent sufferings, was dreadful. We entered by the gate of the *raval*, or suburb. There was not a living thing to be seen in the street; the houses had been pulled down, that the fire of the place might not be obstructed in the event of a lodgement in the outwork. We passed on, the military music echoing mournfully amongst the ruined walls, to the main gate, or *Puerto de Tierra*, which was also open, and the drawbridge lowered. Under the archway, we saw a delicate female, worn to the bone, and weak as an infant, gathering garbage of the most loathsome description, the possession of which had been successfully disputed by a carrion crow. A little farther on, the bodies of an old man and two small children were putrefying in the sun, while beside them lay a miserable, wasted, dying negro, vainly endeavouring to keep at a distance with a palm branch, a number of the same obscene birds that were already devouring the carcass of one of the infants; before two hours, the faithful servant, and those he attempted to defend, were equally the prey of the disgusting *gallinazo*. The houses as we proceeded, appeared entirely deserted, except where a solitary spectre-like inhabitant appeared at a balcony, and feebly exclaimed, "*Viva los Espanoles! Viva, Fernando Septimo!*"—We saw no domestic animal whatsoever, not even a cat or a dog; but I will not dwell on these horrible details any longer.

One morning, shortly after our arrival, as we strolled beyond the land gate, we came to a place where four *banquillos* (a sort of short bench or stool, with an upright post at one end firmly fixed into the ground,) were placed opposite a dead wall. They were painted black, and we were not left long in suspense as to their use; for solemn music, and the roll of muffled drums in the distance, were fearful indications of what we were to witness.

First came an entire regiment of Spanish infantry, which, filing off, formed three sides of a square,—the wall near which the *banquillos* were placed forming the fourth; then eight priests, and as many choristers chanting the service for the dying; next came several mounted officers of the staff, and four firing parties of twelve men each. Three Spanish American prisoners followed, dressed in white, with crucifixes in their hands, each supported, more dead than alive, by two priests; but when the fourth victim appeared, we could neither look at nor think of any thing else.

On inquiry, we found he was an Englishman, of the name of S——, English that is, in all except the place of his birth, for his whole education had been English, as were his parents and all his family; but it came out accidentally I believe, on his trial, that he had been *born* at Buenos Ayres, and having joined the patriots, this brought treason home to him, which he was now led forth to expiate. Whilst his fellow-sufferers appeared crushed down to the very earth, under their intense agony, so that they had to be supported as they tottered towards the place of execution, he stepped firmly and manfully out, and seemed impatient when at any time, from the crowding in front,

the procession was obliged to halt. At length they reached the fatal spot, and his three companions in misery being placed astride on the *banquillos*, their arms were placed round the upright posts, and fastened to them with cords, *their backs being towards the soldiers*. Mr. S—— walked firmly up to the vacant bench, knelt down, and covering his face with his hands, rested his head on the edge of it. For a brief space he seemed to be engaged in prayer, during which he sobbed audibly, but soon recovering himself, he rose, and folding his arms across his breast, sat down slowly and deliberately on the *banquillo*, facing the firing party with an unshrinking eye.

He was now told that he must turn his back and submit to be tied like the others. He resisted this, but on force being attempted to be used, he sprung to his feet, and stretching out his hand, while a dark red flush passed transiently across his pale face, he exclaimed, in a loud voice, "Thus, thus, and not otherwise, you *may* butcher me, but I am an Englishman and no traitor, nor will I die the death of one." Moved by his gallantry the soldiers withdrew, and left him standing. At this time the sun was intensely hot, it was high noon, and the monk who attended Mr. S—— held an umbrella over his head; but the preparations being completed, he kissed him on both cheeks, while the hot tears trickled down his own, and was stepping back, when the unhappy man said to him, with the most perfect composure, "*Todavía padre todavía, mucho me gusta la sombra.*" But the time *had* arrived, the kind-hearted monk was obliged to retire. The signal was given, and they were as clods of the valley—"Truly," quoth old Splinter,

"a man does sometimes become a horse by being born in a stable."

Some time after this, we were allowed to go to the village of Turbaco, a few miles distant from the city, for change of air. On the third morning after our arrival, about the dawning, I was suddenly awakened by a shower of dust on my face, and a violent shaking of the bed, accompanied by a low grumbling unearthly noise, which seemed to pass immediately under where I lay. Were I to liken it to any thing I had ever experienced before, it would be to the lumbering and tremor of a large wagon in a tempestuous night, heard and felt through the thin walls of a London house.—Like—yet how fearfully different.

In a few seconds the motion ceased, and the noise gradually died away in hollow echoes in the distance—whereupon ensued such a crowing of cocks, cackling of geese, barking of dogs, lowing of kine, neighing of horses, and shouting of men, women, and children, amongst the negro and coloured domestics, as baffles all description, whilst the various white inmates of the house (the rooms, for air and coolness, being without ceiling, and simply divided by partitions run up about ten feet high) were, one and all, calling to their servants and each other, in accents which did not by any means evince great composure. In a moment this hubbub again sank into the deepest silence—man, and the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, became mute with breathless awe, at the impending tremendous manifestations of the power of that Almighty Being in whose hands the hills are as a very little thing—for the appalling voice of the earthquake was once more heard growling afar off, like distant

thunder mingling with the rushing of a mighty wind, waxing louder and louder as it approached, and upheaving the sure and firm-set earth into long undulations, as if its surface had been the rolling swell of the fathomless ocean. The house rocked, pictures of saints fell from the walls, tables and chairs were overturned, the window frames were forced out of their embrasures and broken in pieces, beams and rafters groaned and screamed, crushing the tiles of the roof into ten thousand fragments. In several places the ground split open into chasms a fathom wide, with an explosion like a cannon shot; the very foundation of the house seemed to be sinking under us; and whilst men and women rushed like maniacs naked into the fields, with a yell as if the Day of Judgment had arrived, and the whole brute creation, in an agony of fear, made the most desperate attempts to break forth from their enclosures into the open air; the end wall of my apartment was shaken down, and falling outwards with a deafening crash, disclosed, in the dull gray mysterious twilight of morning, the huge gnarled trees that overshadowed the building, bending and groaning, amidst clouds of dust, as if they had been tormented by a tempest, although the air was calm and motionless as death.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PICCAROON.

"FADER was a Corramantee,
Moder was a Mingo,
Black Picaniny Buccra wantee,
So dem sell a me Peter, by jingo.
Jiggery, jiggery, jiggery."

"Well sung, Massa Bungo," exclaimed Mr. Splinter; "where do you hail from, my hearty?"

"Hillo! Bungo, indeed! free and easy dat any how. Who you yousef, eh?"

"Why, Peter," continued the Lieutenant, "don't you know me?"

"Cannot say dat I do," rejoined the negro, very gravely, without lifting his head, as he sat mending his jacket in one of the embrasures near the water-gate of the arsenal—"Have not de honour of your acquaintance, sir."

He then resumed his ~~scream~~ song, for song it could not be called:—

"Mammy Sally's daughter
Lose him shoe in an old canoe
Dat lay half-full of water,
And den she knew not what to do.
Jiggery, jig"—

"Confound your jiggery, jiggery, sir! But I know you well enough, my man; and you can scarcely have forgotten Lieutenant Splinter of the Torch, one would think?"

However, it was clear that the poor fellow really had not known us; for the name so startled him, that, in his hurry to unlace his legs from under him, as he sat tailor fashion, he fairly capsized out of his perch, and toppled down on his nose—a feature fortunately so flattened by the hand of nature, that I question if it could have been rendered more obtuse had he fallen out of the maintop on a timber-head, or a marine officer's."

"Eh!—no—yes, him sure enough, and who is de Picaniny hoffer—Oh! I see, Massa Tom Cringle? Why, gentlemen, where have you drop from?—Where is de old Torch? Many a time hab I Peter Mangrove Pilot to Him Britannic Majesty squadron, taken de old brig in and through amongst de keys at Port Royal!"

"Ay, and how often did you scour her copper against the coral reefs, Peter?"

His Majesty's pilot gave a knowing look, and laid his hand on his breast—"No more of dat if you love me, massa."

"Well, well, it don't signify now, my boy; she will never give you that trouble again—foundered—all hands lost, Peter, But the two you see before you."

"Werry sorry, Massa Plinter, werry sorry—What! de black cooks, mate and all?—But misfortune can't be help. Stop till I put up my needle, and I will take a turn wid you." Here he drew up him-

self with a great deal of absurd gravity. "Proper dat British hoffer in distress should assist one another—We shall consult togeder.—How can I serve you?"

"Why, Peter, if you could help us to a passage to Port Royal, it would be serving us most essentially. When we used to be lying there, a week seldom passed without one of the squadron arriving from this; but here have we been for more than a month, without a single pennant belonging to the station having looked in: our money is running short, and if we are to hold on in Carthagera for another six weeks, we shall not have a shot left in the locker—not a copper to tinkle on a tombstone."

The negro looked steadfastly at us, then carefully around. There was no one near.

"You see, Massa Plinter, I am desirable to serve you, for one little reason of my own; but, beside dat, it is good for me at present to make some friend wid de hoffer of de squadron, being as how dat I am absent widout leave."

"Oh, I perceive, a large R against your name in the master attendant's books, eh?"

"You have hit it, sir, werry close; besides I long mosh to return to my peor wife, Nancy Cator, dat I leave, wagabone dat I is, just about to be confine."

I could not resist putting in my oar.

"I saw Nancy just before we sailed, Peter,—fine child that; not quite so black as you, though."

"Oh, Massa," said Snowball, grinning and showing his white teeth, "You know I am such a terrible black fellow—But you are a leetle out at present, Massa—I meant, about to be confine in de workhouse,

for stealing de Admiral's Muscovy ducks;" and he laughed loud and long.—"However, if you will promise that you will stand my friends, I will put you in de way of getting a shove across to de east end of Jamaica; and I will go wid you, too, for company."

"Thank you," rejoined Mr. Splinter; "but how do you mean to manage this? There is no Kingston trader here at present, and you don't mean to make a start of it in an open boat, do you?"

"No, sir, I don't; but, in de first place—as you are a gentleman, will you try and get me off when we get to Jamaica? Secondly, will you promise that you will not seek to know more of the vessel you may go in, nor of her crew, than they are willing to tell you; provided you are landed safe?"

"Why, Peter, I scarcely think you would deceive us, for you know I saved your bacon in that awkward affair, when through drunkenness you plumped the Torch ashore, so"——

"Forget dat, sir,—forget dat!—never shall poor black pilot forget how you saved him from being seized up when de gratings, boatswain's-mates and all, were ready at de gangway—never shall poor black rascal forget dat."

"Indeed, I do not think you would wittingly betray us into trouble, Peter; and as I guess you mean one of the forced traders, we will venture in her, rather than kick about here any longer, and pay a moderate sum for our passage."

"Den wait here five minutes,"—and so saying, he slipped down through the embrasure into a canoe that lay beneath, and in a trice we saw him jump on board

of a long low nondescript kind of craft, that lay moored within pistol-shot of the walls.

She was a large shallow vessel, coppered to the bends, of great breadth of beam, with bright sides, like an American, so painted as to give her a clumsy mercantile sheer externally, but there were many things that belied this to a nautical eye: her copper, for instance, was bright as burnished gold on her very sharp bows, and beautiful run; and we could see from the bastion where we stood, that her decks were flush and level. She had no cannon mounted that were visible, but we distinguished grooves on her well-scrubbed decks, as from the recent traversing of caronade slides, while the bolts and rings in her high and solid bulwarks shone clear and bright in the ardent noontide. There was a tarpawling stretched over a quantity of rubbish, old sails, old junk, and hencoops rather ostentatiously piled up forward, which we conjectured might conceal a long gun.

She was a very taught-rigged hermaphrodite, or brig forward and schooner aft. Her foremast and bowsprit were immensely strong and heavy, and her mainmast was so long and tapering, that the wonder was, how the few shrouds and stays about it could support it: it was the handsomest stick we had ever seen. Her upper spars were on the same scale, tapering away through topmast, top-gallant-mast, royal and skysail-masts, until they fined away into slender wands. The sails, that were loose to dry, were old, and patched, and evidently displayed to cloak the character of the vessel, by an ostentatious show of their unserviceable condition, but her rigging was beautifully fitted, every rope lying in the chafe of

another, being carefully served with hide. There were several large bushy-whiskered fellows lounging about the deck, with their hair gathered into dirty net bags, like the fishermen of Barcelona; many had red silk sashes round their waists, through which were stuck their long knives, in shark-skin sheaths. Their numbers were not so great as to excite suspicion; but a certain daring reckless manner, would at once have distinguished them, independently of any thing else, from the quiet, hard-worked, red-shirted merchant seaman.

"That chap is not much to be trusted," said the Lieutenant: "his bunting would make a few jackets for Joseph, I take it." But we had little time to be critical before our friend Peter came paddling back with another blackamoor in the stern, of as ungainly an exterior as could well be imagined. He was a very large man, whose weight every now and then, as they breasted the short sea, cocked up the snout of the canoe with Peter Mangrove in it, as if he had been a cork, leaving him to flourish his paddle in the air like the weather-wheel of a steam-boat in a seaway. The new comer was strong and broad-shouldered, with long muscular arms, and a chest like Hercules; but his legs and thighs were, for his bulk, remarkably puny and misshapen. A thick felt of black wool in close tufts, as if his face had been stuck full of cloves, covered his chin and upper lip; and his hair, if hair it could be called, was twisted into a hundred short plaits, that bristled out, and gave his head, when he took his hat off, the appearance of a porcupine. There was a large sabre-cut across his nose, and down his cheek, and he wore two immense gold ear-rings. His dress

consisted of short cotton drawers, that did not reach within two inches of his knee, leaving his thin cucumber shanks (on which the small bullet-like calf appeared to have been stuck before, through mistake, in place of abaft,) naked to the shoe; a check shirt, and an enormously large Panama hat, made of a sort of cane, split small, and worn shovel-fashion. Notwithstanding, he made his bow by no means ungracefully, and offered his services in choice Spanish, but spoke English as soon as he heard who we were.

"Pray, sir, are you the master of that vessel?" said the Lieutenant.

"No, sir, I am the mate, and I learn you are desirous of a passage to Jamaica." This was spoken with a broad Scotch accent.

"Yes, we do," said I, in very great astonishment; "but we will not sail with the devil; and who ever saw a negro Scotchman before, the spirit of Nicol Jarvie conjured into a blackamoor's skin!"

The fellow laughed. "I am black, as you see; so were my father and mother before me." And he looked at me, as much as to say, I have read the book you quote from. "But I was born in the good town of Port Glasgow, notwithstanding, and many a voyage I have made as cabin-boy and cook, in the good ship the Peggy Bogle, with worthy old Jock Hunter; but that matters not. I was told you wanted to go to Jamaica; I dare say our Captain will take you for a moderate passage-money. But here he comes to speak for himself.—Captain Vanderbosh, here are two shipwrecked British officers, who wish to be put on shore on the east end of Jamaica; will you take them, and what will you charge for their passage?"

The man he spoke to was nearly as tall as himself; he was a sun-burnt, angular, raw-boned, iron-visaged veteran, with a nose in shape and colour like the bowl of his own pipe, but not at all, according to the received idea, like a Dutchman. His dress was quizzical enough—white trowsers, a long-flapped embroidered waistcoat, that might have belonged to a Spanish grandee, with an old-fashioned French-cut coat, showing the frayed marks where the lace had been stripped off, voluminous in the skirts, but very tight in the sleeves, which were so short as to leave his large bony paws, and six inches of his arm above the wrist, exposed; altogether, it fitted him like a purser's shirt on a handspike.

“Vy, for von hondred thaler, I will land dem safe in Mancheoneal Bay; but how shall ve manage, Vil-liamson? De cabin vas paint yesterday.”

The Scotch negro nodded. “Never mind; I dare say the smell of the paint won't signify to the gentlemen.”

The bargain was ratified, we agreed to pay the stipulated sum, and that same evening, having dropped down with the last of the sea-breeze, we set sail from Bocca Chica, and began working up under the lee of the headland of Punto Canoa. When off Sandomingo Gate, we burned a blue light, which was immediately answered by another in shore of us. In the glare, we could perceive two boats, full of men. Any one who has ever played at snap-dragon, can imagine the unearthly appearance of objects when seen by this species of firework. In the present instance, it was held aloft on a boat-hook, and cast a strong spectral light on the band of lawless ruffians, who were so crowded

together, that they entirely filled the boats, no part of which could be seen. It seemed as if two clusters of fiends, suddenly vomited forth from hell, were floating on the surface of the midnight sea, in the midst of brimstone flames. In a few moments, our crew was strengthened by about forty as ugly Christians as I ever set eyes on. They were of all ages, countries, complexions, and tongues, and looked as if they had been kidnapped by a press-gang, as they had knocked off from the Tower of Babel. From the moment they came on board, Captain Vanderbosh was shorn of all his glory, and sank into the petty officer, while to our amazement, the Scottish negro took the command, evincing great coolness, energy, and skill. He ordered the ship to be wore, as soon as we had shipped the men, and laid her head off the land, then set all hands to shift the old suit of sails, and to bend new ones.

"Why did you not shift your convass before we started?" said I, to the Dutch Captain, or Mate, or whatever he might be.

"Vy vont you be content to take a quiet passage and hax no questions?" was the uncivil rejoinder, which I felt inclined to resent, until I remembered that we were in the hands of the Philistines, where a quarrel would have been worse than useless. I was gulping down the insult as well as I could, when the black Captain came aft, and, with the air of an equal, invited us into the cabin to take a glass of grog. We had scarcely sat down before we heard a noise like the swaying up of guns, or some other heavy articles, from the hold.

I caught Mr. Splinter's eye—he nodded, but said

nothing. In half an hour afterwards, when we went on deck, we saw by the light of the moon, twelve eighteen pound carronades mounted, six of a side, with their accompaniments of rammers and sponges, water buckets, boxes of round, grape, and canister, and tubs of wadding, while the combings of the hatchways were thickly studded with round shot. The tarpawling and lumber forward had disappeared, and there lay long Tom ready levelled, grinning on his pivot.

The ropes were all coiled away, and laid down in regular man-of-war fashion; while an ugly gruff beast of a Spanish mulatto, apparently the officer of the watch, walked the weather-side of the quarter-deck, in the true pendulum style. Look-outs were placed aft, and at the gangways and bows, who, every now and then passed the word to keep a bright look-out, while the rest of the watch were stretched silent, but evidently broad awake, under the lee of the boat. We noticed that each man had his cutlass buckled round his waist—that the boarding-pikes had been cut loose from the main boom, round which they had been strapped, and that about thirty muskets were ranged along a fixed rack, that ran athwart ships, near the main hatchway.

By the time we had reconnoitred thus far, the night became overcast, and a thick bank of clouds piled upon clouds, began to rise to windward; some heavy drops of rain fell, and the thunder grumbled at a distance. The black veil crept gradually on, until it shrouded the whole firmament, and left us in as dark a night as ever poor devils were out in. By and by a narrow streak of bright moonlight appeared under

the lower edge of the bank, defining the dark outlines of the tumbling multitudinous billows on the horizon, as distinctly as if they had been paste-board waves in a theatre.

"Is that a sail to windward, in the clear, think you?" said Mr. Splinter to me, in a whisper. At this moment it lightened vividly. "I am sure it is," continued he—"I could see her white sails in the glance just now."

I looked steadily, and, at last, caught the small dark speck against the bright background, rising and falling on the swell of the sea like a feather.

As we stood on, she was seen more distinctly, but, to all appearance, nobody was aware of her proximity. We were mistaken in this, however, for the Captain suddenly jumped on a gun, and gave his orders with a fiery energy that startled us.

"Leroux!" A small French boy was at his side in a moment. "Forward, and call all hands to shorten sail; but *doucement*, yon land crab!—Man the fore clew garnets.—Hands by the topgallant clew lines—peak and throat halyards—jib down-haul—rise tacks and sheets—let go—clew up—settle away the main-gaff there!"

In almost as short a space as I have taken to write it, every inch of canvass was close furled—every light, except the one in the binnacle, carefully extinguished—a hundred and twenty men at quarters, and the ship under bare poles. The head yards were then squared, and we bore up before the wind. The stratagem proved successful; the strange sail could be seen through the night glasses, cracking on close to the wind, evidently under the impression that we had tacked.

"Dere she goes, chasing de Gobel," said the Dutchman. She now burned a blue light, by which we saw she was a heavy cutter—without doubt our old fellow-cruiser the Spark. The Dutchman had come to the same conclusion. "My eye, Captain, no use to dodge from her; it is only dat footy little King's cutter on de Jamaica station."

"It is her, true enough," answered Williamson; "and she is from Santa Martha with a freight of specie, I know. I will try a brush with her, by"——

Splinter struck in before he could finish his irreverent exclamation. "If your conjecture be true, I know the craft—a heavy vessel of her class, and you may depend on hard knocks and small profit, if you do take her; while, if she takes you"——

"I'll be hanged if she does"—and he grinned at the conceit—then setting his teeth hard, "or rather, I will blow the schooner up with my own hand before I strike; better that, than have one's bones bleached in chains on a key at Port Royal.—But, you see you cannot control us, gentlemen; so get down into the cable tier, and take Peter Mangrove with you. I would not willingly see those come to harm who have trusted me."

However, there was no shot flying as yet, we therefore staid on deck. All sail was once more made; the carronades were cast loose on both sides, and double shotted; the long gun slewed round; the tack of the fore and aft foresail hauled up, and we kept by the wind, and stood after the cutter, whose white canvass we could still see through the gloom like a snow-wreath.

As soon as she saw us, she tacked and stood to—

wards us, and came gallantly bowling along, with the water roaring and flashing at her bows. As the vessels neared each other, they both shortened sail, and finding that we could not weather her, we steered close under her lee.

As we crossed on opposite tacks, her Commander hailed, "Ho, the Brigantine, ahoy!"

"Hillo!" sung out Blackie, as he backed his main-top-sail.

"What schooner is that?"

"The Spanish schooner, Caridad."

"Whence, and whither bound?"

"Carthagena, to Porto Rico."

"Heave to, and send your boat on board."

"We have none that will swim, sir."

"Very well—bring to, and I will send mine."

"Call away the boarders," said our Captain, in a low stern tone, "let them crouch out of sight behind the boat."

The cutter wore, and hove to under our lee quarter, within pistol-shot; we heard the rattle of the ropes running through the davit blocks, and the splash of the jolly boat touching the water, then the measured stroke of the oars, as they glanced like silver in the sparkling sea, and a voice calling out, "Give way, my lads."

The character of the vessel we were on board of was now evident; and the bitter reflection that we were chained to the stake on board of a pirate, on the eve of a fierce contest with one of our own cruisers, was aggravated by the consideration that the cutter had fallen into a snare, by which a whole boat's crew would be sacrificed before a shot was fired.

I watched my opportunity as she pulled up alongside, and called out, leaning well over the nettings, "Get back to your ship!—treachery! get back to your ship." The little French serpent was at my side with the speed of thought, his long clear knife glancing in one hand, while the fingers of the other were laid on his lips. He could not have said more plainly, "Hold your tongue, or I'll cut your throat." The officer in the boat had heard me imperfectly; he rose up—"I won't go back, my good man, until I see what you are made of;" and as he spoke he sprung on board, but the instant he got over the bulwarks he was caught by two strong hands, gagged and thrown bodily down the main hatchway. "Heave!" cried a voice, "and with a will!" and four cold thirty-two pound shot were hove at once into the boat alongside, and crashing through her bottom, swamped her in a moment, precipitating the miserable crew into the boiling sea. Their shrieks still ring in my ears as they clung to the oars, and some loose planks of the boat. "Bring up the officer, and take out the gag," said Williamson. Poor Walcolm, who had been an old messmate of mine, was dragged to the gangway half naked, his face bleeding, and heavily ironed, when the blackamoor, clapping a pistol to his head, bid him, as he feared instant death, hail "that the boat had swamped under the counter, and to send another." The poor fellow who appeared stunned and confused, did so, but without seeming to know what he said. "Why," said Mr. Splinter, "don't you mean to pick up the boat's crew?" The blood curdled to my heart as the black savage answered,

in a voice of thunder, "Let them drown and be d—d! fill, and stand on!"

But the clouds by this time broke away, and the mild moon shone clearly and brightly once more, upon this scene of most atrocious villany. By her light, the cutter's people could see that there was no one struggling in the water now, and that the people must either have been saved, or were past all earthly aid; but the infamous deception was not entirely at an end.

The Captain of the cutter seeing we were making sail, hailed once more. "Mr. Walcolm, run to leeward, and heave to." "Answer him instantly, and hail again for another boat," said the sable fiend, and cocked his pistol. The click went to my heart. The young midshipman turned his pale mild countenance, laced with his blood, upwards towards the moon and stars, as one who had looked his last look on earth; the large tears were flowing down his cheeks, and mingling with the crimson streaks, and a flood of silver light fell on the fine features of the poor boy, as he said, firmly, "Never." The miscreant fired, and he fell dead. "Up with the helm, and wear across her stern." The order was obeyed. "Fire!" The whole broadside was poured in, and we could hear the shot rattle and tear along the cutter's deck, and the shrieks and groans of the wounded, while the white splinters glanced away in all directions.

We now ranged alongside, and close action commenced, and never do I expect to see such an infernal scene again. Up to this moment there had been neither confusion nor noise on board the pirate—all

had been coolness and order; but when the yards locked, the crew broke loose from all control—they ceased to be men—they were demons, for they threw their own dead and wounded, as they were mown down like grass by the cutter's grape, indiscriminately down the hatchways to get clear of them. They stript themselves almost naked; and although they fought with the most desperate courage, yelling and cursing, each in his own tongue, yet their very numbers, pent up in a small vessel, were against them. Amidst the fire, and smoke, and hellish uproar, we could see that the deck had become a very shambles; and unless they soon carried the cutter by boarding, it was clear that the coolness and discipline of my own glorious service must prevail, even against such fearful odds, the superior size of the vessel, greater number of guns, and heavier metal. The pirates seemed aware of this, for they now made a desperate attempt forward to carry their antagonist by boarding, led on by the black Captain. Just at this moment, the cutter's main-boom fell across the schooner's deck, close to where we were sheltering ourselves from the shot the best way we could; and while the rush forward was being made, by a sudden impulse Splinter and I, followed by Peter, scrambled along it as the cutter's people were repelling the attack on her bow, and all three of us in our haste jumped down on the poor Irishman at the wheel.

“Murder, fire, rape, and robbery! it is capsized, stove in, and destroyed I am! Captain, Captain, we are carried aft here—Och, hubbaboo for Patrick Donnelly.”

There was no time to be lost; if any of the crew

came aft, we were dead men, so we tumbled down through the cabin skylight, the hatch having been knocked off by a shot, and stowed ourselves away in the side berths. The noise on deck soon ceased—the cannon were again plied—gradually the fire slackened, and we could hear that the pirate had scraped clear and escaped. Some time after this, the Lieutenant commanding the cutter came down. Poor Mr. Douglas! we both knew him well. He sat down and covered his face with his hands, while the blood oozed down between his fingers. He had received a cutlass wound on the head in the attack. His right arm was bound up with his neckcloth, and he was very pale. “Steward, bring me a light—Ask the Doctor how many are killed and wounded; and, do you hear, tell him to come to me when he is done forward, but not a moment sooner. To have been so mauled and duped by a cursed Buccaneer; and my poor boat’s crew”——

Splinter groaned. He started—but at this moment the man returned again. “Thirteen killed, your honour, and fifteen wounded, scarcely one of us untouched.” The poor fellow’s own scull was bound round with a bloody cloth.

“God help me! God help me! but they have died the death of men. Who knows what death the poor fellows in the boat have died!”—Here he was cut short by a tremendous scuffle on the ladder, down which an old quarter-master was trundled neck and crop into the cabin. “How now, Jones?”

“Please your honour,” said the man, as soon as he had gathered himself up, and had time to turn his quid, and smooth down his hair; but again the uproar

was renewed, and Donnally was lugged in, scrambling and struggling, between two seamen. "This here Irish chap, your honour, has lost his wits, if so be he ever had any, your honour. He has gone mad through fright."

"Fright he be d—d!" roared Donnally; "no man ever frightened me: but as your honour was skewering them bloody thieves forward, I was boarded and carried aft by the devil, your honour—pooped by Belzeebub, by ———," and he rapped his fist on the table until every thing on it danced again. "There were three of them your honour—a black one and two blue ones—a long one and two short ones—each with two horns on his head, for all the world like those on Father M'Cleary's red cow—no, she was humbled—it is Father Clanachan's I mane—no, not his neither, for his was the parish bull; fait, I don't know what I mane, except that they had horns on their heads, and vomited fire, and had each of them a tail at his stern, twisting and twining like a conger eel, with a blue light at the end on't."

"And dat's a lie, if ever dere was one," exclaimed Peter Mangrove, jumping from the berth. "Look at me, you Irish tief, and tell me if I have a blue light or a conger eel at my stern?"

This was too much for poor Donnally. He yelled out, "You'll believe your own eyes now, your honour, when you see one o' dem bodily before you! Let me go—let me go!" and, rushing up the ladder, he would have ended his earthly career in the salt sea, had his bullet head not encountered the broadest part of the purser, who was in the act of descending, with such violence, that he shot him out of the com-

panion-ladder several feet above the deck, as if he had been discharged from a culverin; but the recoil sent poor Donnally, stunned and senseless, to the bottom of the ladder. There was no standing all this, we laughed outright, and made ourselves known to Mr. Douglas, who received us cordially, and in a week we were landed at Port Royal.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PICCAROON,—CONTINUED.

THE only other midshipman on board the cutter beside young Walcolm, whose miserable death we had witnessed, was a slight delicate little fellow, about fourteen years old, of the name of Duncan; he was the smallest boy of his age I ever saw, and had been badly hurt in repelling the attack of the pirate. His wound was a lacerated puncture in the left shoulder from a boarding-pike, but it appeared to be healing kindly, and for some days we thought he was doing well. However, about five o'clock in the afternoon, before we made Jamaica, the surgeon accosted Mr. Douglas as we were walking the deck together. "I fear little Duncan is going to slip through my fingers after all, sir."—"No!—I thought he had been better."—"So he was till about noon, when a twitching of the muscles came on, which I fear betokens lock jaw; he wavers, too, now and then, a bad sign of itself where there is a fretting wound."—We went below, where, notwithstanding the wind-sail that was let down close to where his hammock was slung, the heat of the small vessel was suffocating. The large coarse tallow

candle in the purser's lantern, that hung beside his shoulder, around which the loathsome cockroaches fluttered like moths in a summer evening, filled the between decks with a rancid oily smell, and with smoke as if from a torch, while it ran down and melted like fat before a fire. It cast a dull sickly gleam on the pale face of the brown-haired, girlish-looking lad, as he lay in his narrow hammock. When we entered, an old quarter-master was rubbing his legs, which were jerking about like the limbs of a galvanized frog, while two of the boys held his arms, also violently convulsed. The poor little fellow was crying and sobbing most piteously, but made a strong effort to compose himself and "be a man" when he saw us.—"This is so good of you, Mr. Cringle! you will take charge of my letter to my sister, I know you will?—I say, Anson," to the quarter-master, "do lift me up a little till I try and finish it.—It will be a sore heart to poor Sarah; she has no mother now, nor father, and aunt is not over kind,"—and again he wept bitterly. "Confound this jumping hand, it won't keep steady, all I can do.—I say, Doctor, I sha'n't die this time, shall I?"—"I hope not, my fine little fellow."—"I don't think I shall; I shall live to be a man yet, in spite of that bloody Buccaneer's pike, I know I shall." The death-rattle, however, was already in his throat, and the flame was flickering in the socket; even as he spoke, the muscles of his neck stiffened to such a degree that I thought he was choked, but the violence of the convulsion quickly subsided. "I am done for, Doctor!" he could no longer open his mouth, but spoke through his clenched teeth—"I feel it now!—God Almighty receive my

soul, and protect my poor sister!" The arch-enemy was, indeed, advancing to the final struggle, for he now gave a sudden and sharp cry, and stretched out his legs and arms, which instantly became as rigid as marble, and in his agony he turned his face to the side I stood on, but he was no longer sensible. "Sister," he said with difficulty—"Don't let them throw me overboard; there are sharks here."—"Land on the lee-bow," sung out the man at the mast-head. The common life sound would not have moved any of us in the routine of duty, but bursting in, under such circumstances, it made us all start, as if it had been something unusual; the dying midshipman heard it, and said calmly—"Land,—I will never see it.—But how blue all your lips look.—It is cold, piercing cold, and dark, dark." Something seemed to rise in his throat, his features sharpened still more, and he tried to gasp, but his clenched teeth prevented him—he was gone.

I went on deck with a heavy heart, and, on looking in the direction indicated, I beheld the towering Blue Mountain peak rising high above the horizon, even at the distance of fifty miles, with its outline clear and distinct against the splendid western sky, now gloriously illumined by the light of the set sun. We stood on under easy sail for the night, and next morning when the day broke, we were off the east end of the magnificent Island of Jamaica. The stupendous peak now appeared to rise close aboard of us, with a large solitary star sparkling on his forehead, and reared his forest-crowned summit high into the cold blue sky, impending over us in frowning magnificence, while the long dark range of the Blue Mountains, with

their outlines hard and clear in the gray light, sloped away on each side of him as if they had been the Giant's shoulders. Great masses of white mist hung on their sides about half way down, but all the valleys and coast as yet slept in the darkness. We could see that the land-wind was blowing strong in shore, from the darker colour of the water, and the speed with which the coasters, only distinguishable by their white sails, slid along: while astern of us, out at sea, yet within a cable's length, for we had only shot beyond its influence, the prevailing trade-wind blew a smart breeze, coming up strong to a defined line, beyond which and between it, and the influence of the land-wind, there was a belt of dull lead-coloured sea, about half a mile broad, with a long heavy groundswell rolling, but smooth as glass, and without even a ripple on the surface, in the midst of which we lay dead becalmed.

The heavy dew was shaken in large drops out of the wet flapping sails, against which the reef points pattered like hail as the vessel rolled. The decks were wet and slippery, and our jackets saturated with moisture; but we enjoyed the luxury of cold to a degree that made the sea-water, when dashed about the decks, as they were being holystoned, appear absolutely warm. Presently, all nature awoke in its freshness so suddenly, that it looked like a change of scene in a theatre. The sun, as yet set to us, rose to the huge peak, and glanced like lightning on his summit, making it gleam like an amethyst. The clouds on his shaggy ribs rolled upwards, and enveloped his head and shoulders, and were replaced by the thin blue mists which ascended from the valleys, forming

a fleecy canopy, beneath which appeared hill and dale, woods and cultivated lands, where all had been undistinguishable a minute before, and gushing streams burst from the mountain sides like gouts of froth, marking their course in the level grounds by the vapours they sent up. Then Breere mill-towers burst into light, and cattle mills, with their cone-shaped roofs, and overseers' houses, and water mills, with the white spray falling from the wheels, and sugar-works, with long pennants of white smoke, streaming from the boiling-house chimneys in the morning wind. Immediately after, gangs of negroes were seen at work; loaded wagons, with enormous teams of fourteen to twenty oxen dragging them, rolled along the roads; long strings of mules loaded with canes were threading the fields; dragging vessels were seen to shove out from every cove; the morning song of the black fishermen was heard, while their tiny canoes, like black specks, started up suddenly on all sides of us, as if they had floated from the bottom of the sea; and the smiling scene burst at once, and as if by magic, on us, in all its coolness and beauty, under the cheering influence of the rapidly rising sun. We fired a gun, and made the signal for a pilot; upon which a canoe, with three negroes in it, shoved off from a small schooner lying to about a mile to leeward. They were soon alongside, when one of the three jumped on board. This was the pilot, a slave, as I knew, and, in my innocence, I expected to see something very squalid and miserable, but there was nothing of the kind; for I never in my life saw a more spruce salt-water dandy, in a small way. He was well dressed, according to a seamen's notion—clean

white trowsers, check shirt, with white lapels, neatly fastened at the throat with a black riband, smart straw hat; and altogether he carried an appearance of comfort—I was going to write independence—about him, that I was by no means prepared for. He moved about with a swaggering roll, grinning and laughing with the seamen. “I say, Blackie,” said Mr. Douglas.—“John Lodge, if you please, massa; Blackie is not politeful, sir,” whereupon he showed his white teeth again. “Well, well, John Lodge, you are running us in too close, surely;” and the remark seemed seasonable enough to a stranger, for the rocks on the bold shore were now within half pistol shot.—“Mind your eye,” shouted old Anson. “You will have us ashore, you black rascal!”—“You, sir, what water have you here?” sung out Mr. Splinter. “Salt water, massa,” rapped out Lodge, fairly dumfounded by such a volley of questions—“You hab six fathom good here, massa;” but suspecting he had gone too far—“I take de Tonnant, big ship as him is, close to dat reef, sir, you might lave jump ashore, so you need not frighten for your leetle dish of a hooker; beside, massa, my character is at take, you know”—then another grin and bow. There was no use in being angry with the poor fellow, so he was allowed to have his own way until we anchored in the evening at Port Royal. The morning after we arrived, I went ashore with a boat’s crew to perform the magnanimous operation of cutting brooms; we pulled ashore for Green Bay, under the guns of the Twelve Apostles—a heavy battery of twelve cannon, where there is a tombstone with an inscription, setting forth that the party, over whom it was erected, had been actually swallowed up

in the great earthquake that destroyed the opposite town, but subsequently disgorged again; being, perchance, an unseemly morsel.

We approached the beach—"Oars"—the men laid them in. "What sort of nuts be them, Peter Combings?" said the coxswain to a new hand who had been lately impressed, and was now standing at the bow ready to fend off.

Peter broke off one of the branches from the bush nearest him.—"Smite my timbers, do the trees here bear shell fish?" The tide in the Gulf of Mexico does not ebb and flow above two feet, except at the springs, and the ends of the drooping branches of the mangrove trees, that here cover the shore, are clustered, within the wash of the water, with a small well-flavoured oyster. The first thing the seamen did when they got ashore, was to fasten an oakum tail to the rump of one of the most lubberly of the cutter's crew; they then gave him ten yards law, when they started in chase, shouting amongst the bushes, and switching each other like the veriest schoolboys. I had walked some distance along the beach, pelting the amphibious little creatures, half crab, half lobster, called soldiers, which kept shouldering their large claws, and running out and in their little burrows, as the small ripple twinkled on the sand in the rising sun, when two men-of-wars' boats, each with three officers in the stern, suddenly pulled round a little promontory that intercepted my view ahead. Being somewhat out of the line of my duty, so far from my boat, I squatted amongst the brushwood, thinking they would pass by; but, as the devil would have it, they pulled directly for the place where I was en-

sconed, beached their boats, and jumped on shore. "Here's a mess," thought I.

I soon made out that one of the officers was Captain Pinkem of the Flash, and that the parties saluted each other with that stern courtesy, which augured no good. "So, so, my masters, not enough of fighting on the coast of America, but you must have a little private defacing of God's image amongst yourselves?" Pinkem spoke first. "Mr. Clinch," (I now knew he addressed the First Lieutenant of the flag-ship.) "Mr. Clinch, it is not too late to prevent unpleasant consequences; I ask you again, at the eleventh hour, will you make an apology?" He seemed hurried and fidgety in his manner; which rather surprised me, as I knew he was a seasoned hand in these matters, and it contrasted unfavourably with the calm bearing of his antagonist, who by this time had thrown his hat on the ground, and stood with one foot on the handkerchief that marked his position, the distance, twelve paces, having already been measured. By the by, his position was deucedly near in a line with the gray stone behind which I lay hid; nevertheless, the risk I ran did not prevent me noticing that he was very pale, and had much the air of a brave man come to die in a bad cause. He looked upwards for a second or two, and then answered, slowly and distinctly, "Captain Pinkem, I now repeat what I said before; this rencontre is none of my seeking. You accuse me of having spoken slightly of you seven years ago, when I was a mere boy. You have the evidence of a gallant officer that I did so, therefore, I may not gainsay it; but of uttering the words imputed to me, I declare, upon my honour, I have no recollection." He paused.

"That won't do, my fine fellow," said Pinkem. "You are unreasonable," rejoined Clinch, in the same measured tone, "to expect farther *amende* for uttering words which I have no conviction of having spoken; yet, to any other officer in the service, I would not hesitate to make a more direct apology, but you know your credit as a pistol-shot renders this impossible."

"Sorry for it, Mr. Clinch, sorry for it." Here the pistols were handed to the principals by their respective seconds. In their attitudes, the proficient and the novice were strikingly contrasted; (by this time, I had crept round so as to have a view of both parties, or rather, if the truth must be told, to be out of the line of fire.) Pinkem stood with his side accurately turned towards his antagonist, so as to present the smallest possible surface; his head was, as it struck me, painfully slewed round, with his eye looking steadily at Clinch, over his right shoulder, whilst his arm was brought down close to his thigh, with the cock of the pistol turned outwards, so that his weapon must have covered his opponent by the simple raising of his arm below the elbow. Clinch, on the other hand, stood fronting him, with the whole breadth of his chest, holding his weapon awkwardly across his body, with both hands. Pinkem appeared unwilling to take him at such advantage; for, although violent and headstrong, and but too frequently the slave of his passions, he had some noble traits in his character.

"Turn your feather edge to me, Mr. Clinch; take a fair chance, man." The Lieutenant bowed, and I thought would have spoken, but he was checked by

the fear of being thought to fear; however, he took the advice, and in an instant the word was given—"Are you both ready?"—"Yes." "Then fire!" Clinch fired without deliberation. I saw him, for my eyes were fixed on him, expecting to see him fall. He stood firm, however, which was more than I did, as at the instant, a piece of the bullion of an epaulet, at first taken for a pellet of baser metal, struck me sharply on the nose, and shook my equanimity confoundedly; at length I turned to look at Pinkem, and there he stood with his arm raised, pistol levelled, but he had not fired. He stood thus whilst I might have counted ten, like a finger-post, then dropping his hand, his weapon went off, but without aim, the bullet striking the sand near his feet, and down he came headlong to the ground. He fell with his face turned towards me, and I never shall forget the horrible expression of it. His healthy complexion had given place to a deadly blue, the eyes were wide open, and straining in their sockets, the upper lip was drawn up, showing his teeth in a most frightful grin, the blood gushed from his mouth as if impelled by the strokes of a force pump, while his hands griped and dug into the sand.

Before the sun set he was a dead man.

"A neat morning's work, gentlemen," thought I. The two surgeons came up and opened his dress, felt his pulse, and shook their heads; the boats' crews grouped around them—he was lifted into his gig, the word was given to shove off, and I returned to my broom-cutter's.

. When we got on board, the gunner who had the watch was taking his fisherman's walk on the star-

board side of the quarter-deck, and kept looking steadily at the land, as if to avoid seeing poor little Duncan's coffin, that lay on a grating near the gangway. The crew, who were employed in twenty different ways, repairing damages, were bustling about, laughing, joking, and singing, with small regard to the melancholy object before their eyes, when Mr. Douglas put his head up the ladder—"Now, Transom, if you please." The old fellow's countenance fell as if his heart were wrung by the order he had to give. "Aloft there! lie out, you Perkins, and reeve a whip on the starboard yard-arm to lower Mr. — The rest stuck in his throat, and, as if ashamed of his soft-heartedness, he threw as much gruffness as he could into his voice as he sung out—"Beat to quarters there!—knock off, men!" The roll of the drum stayed the confusion and noise of the people at work in an instant, who immediately ranged themselves, in their clean frocks and trowsers, on each side of the quarter-deck. At a given signal, the white deal coffin, wrapped in its befitting pall, the meteor flag of England, swung high above the hammock nettings between us and the clear blue sky, to the long clear note of the boatswain's whistle, which soon ending in a short chirrup, told that it now rested on the thwarts of the boat alongside. We pulled ashore, and it was a sight perchance to move a woman, to see the poor little fellow's hat and bit of a dirk lying on his coffin, whilst the body was carried by four ship boys, the eldest scarcely fourteen. I noticed the tears stand in Anson's eyes as the coffin was lowered into the grave,—the boy had been wounded close to him,—and when we heard the hollow rattle

of the earth on the coffin,—an unusual sound to a sailor—he shuddered.—“Yes, Master Cringle,” he said, in a whisper, “he was a kind-hearted, and as brave a lad as ever trod on shoe leather,—none of the larkings of the men in the clear moonlight nights ever reached the cabin through him,—nor was he the boy to rouse the watch from under the lee of the boats in bad weather, to curry with the lieutenant, while he knew the look-outs were as bright as beagles,—and where was the man in our watch that wanted ’bacco while Mr. Duncan had a shiner left?” The poor fellow drew the back of his horny hand across his eyes, and grumbled out as he turned away, “And here am I, Bill Anson, such a swab as to be ashamed of being sorry for him.”

We were now turned over into the receiving ship, the old Shark, and fortunately there were captains enough in port to try us for the loss of the Torch, so we got over our court martial speedily, and the very day I got back my dirk, the packet brought me out a lieutenant’s commission. Being now my own master for a season, I determined to visit some relations I had in the Island, to whom I had never yet been introduced; so I shook hands with old Splinter, packed my kit, and went to the wharf to charter a wherry to carry me up to Kingston. The moment my object was perceived by the black boat-men, I was surrounded by a mob of them, pulling and hauling each other, and shouting forth the various qualifications of their boats, with such vehemence, that I was nearly deafened. “Massa, no see *Pam be Civil*, sail like a witch, tack like a dolphin!”—“Don’t believe him, Massa, *Ballahoo* is de boat dat can beat him,”—

"Dat's a lie, as I'm a gentleman!" roared a ragged black vagabond.—"Come in de *Monkey*, Massa, no flying fis can beat she."—"Don't boder de gentleman," yelled a fourth.—"Massa love de *Stamp-and-go*—no, no, Massa," as he saw me make a step in the direction of his boat. "Oh! yes, get out of de way, you black rascals,"—the fellow was as black as a sloe himself—"make room for man-of-war buccra; him leetle just now, but will be admiral one day." So saying, the fellow who had thus appropriated me, without more ado, levelled his head like a battering-ram, and began to batter in breach all who stood in his way. He first ran a tilt against *Pam be Civil*, and shot him like a rocket into the sea; the *Monkey* faired no better; the *Balahoo* had to swim for it, and having thus opened a way by main force, I at length got safely moored in the stern sheets; but just as we were shoving off, Mr. Callaloo, the clergyman of Port Royal, a tall yellow personage, begged for a passage, and was accordingly taken on board. As it was high water, my boatmen chose the five foot channel, as the boat channel near to Gallows Point is called, by which a long stretch would be saved, and we were cracking on cheerily, my mind full of my recent promotion, when, scur, scur, scur, we stuck fast on the bank. Our black boatmen, being little encumbered with clothes, jumped overboard in a covey like so many wild ducks, shouting, as they dropped into the water, "We must all get out—we must all get out," whereupon Mr. Callaloo, a sort of Dominie Sampson in his way, promptly leaped overboard up to his waist in the water. The negroes were thunderstruck. "Massa Parson Callaloo, you mad sure-

ly, you mad!"——"Children, I am not mad, but obedient—you said we must all get out,"——"To be sure, Massa, and you no see we *all did* get out?" "And did you not see that I got out too?" rejoined the parson, still in the water. "Oh, lud, Massa! we no mean you—we meant poor niger, not white man parson." "You said *all*, children, and therefore I leaped," pronouncing the last word in two syllables, "be more correct in your grammar next time." The worthy but eccentric old chap then scrambled on board again, amidst the suppressed laughter of the boatmen, and kept his seat, wet clothes and all, until we reached Kingston.

17th Dec. 1831.

CHAPTER X.

SCENES IN JAMAICA.

I confess that I did not promise myself much pleasure from my cruise ashore; somehow or other I had made up my mind to believe, that in Jamaica, putting aside the magnificence and natural beauty of the face of the country, there was little to interest me. I had pictured to myself the slaves—a miserable, squalid, half-fed, ill-clothed, over-worked race—and their masters, and the white inhabitants generally, as an unwholesome-looking crew of saffron-faced tyrants, who wore straw hats with umbrella brims, wide trousers, and calico jackets, living on pepperpot and land crabs, and drinking sangaree and smoking cigars the whole day; in a word, that all that Bryan Edwards and others had written regarding the civilization of the West Indies was a fable. But I was agreeably undeceived; for although I did meet with some extraordinary characters, and witnessed not a few rum scenes, yet on the whole I gratefully bear witness to the great hospitality of the inhabitants, both in the towns and in the country. In Kingston, the society was exceedingly good; as good, I can freely affirm, as I ever met with in any provincial town any where; and there prevailed a warmth of heart, and a kindli-

ness both in the males and females of those families to which I had the good fortune to be introduced, that I never experienced *out* of Jamaica.

At the period I am describing, the island was in the hey-day of its prosperity, and the harbour of Kingston was full of shipping. I had never before seen so superb a mercantile haven; it is completely land-locked, and the whole navy of England might ride in it commodiously.

On the sea face it is almost impregnable, for it would be little short of a miracle for an invading squadron to wind its way through the labyrinth of shoals and reefs lying off the mouth of it, amongst which the channels are so narrow and intricate, that at three or four points the sinking of a sand barge would effectually block up all ingress; but, independently of this, the entrance at Port Royal is defended by very strong works, the guns ranging the whole way across, while, a little farther on, the attacking ships would be exposed to a cross fire from the heavy metal of the Apostles' Battery; and even assuming all these obstacles to be overcome, and the passage into the harbour forced, before they could pass the narrows to get up to the anchorage at Kingston, they would be blown out of the water by a raking fire from sixty pieces of large cannon on Fort Augusta, which is so situated that they would have to turn to windward for at least half an hour, in a strait, which, at the widest, would not allow them to reach beyond musket-shot of the walls. Fortunately, as yet Mr. Canning had not called his New World into existence, and the whole of the trade of Terra Firma, from Porto Cavello down to Chagres, the greater part of the trade of the islands of Cuba

and San Domingo, and even that of Lima and San Blas, and the other ports of the Pacific, carried on across the Isthmus of Darien, centred in Kingston, the usual supplies through Cadiz being stopped by the advance of the French in the Peninsula. The result of this princely traffic, more magnificent than that of Tyre, was a stream of gold and silver flowing into the Bank of England, to the extent of three millions of pounds sterling annually in return for British manufactures; thus supplying the sinews of war to the government at home, and besides the advantage of so large a mart, employing an immense amount of British tonnage, and many thousand seamen; and in numberless ways opening up new outlets to British enterprise and capital. Alas! alas! where is all this now? The echo of the empty stores might answer "where!"

On arriving at Kingston, my first object was to seek out Mr. ***, the Admiral's agent, and one of the most extensive agents in the place, in order to deliver some letters to him, and get his advice as to my future proceedings. Mr. Callaloo undertook to be my pilot, striding along a-beam of me, and leaving in his wake two serpentine dottings on the pavement from the droppings of water from his voluminous coat-skirts, which had been thoroughly soaked from his recent ducking.

Every thing appeared to be thriving, and as we passed along, the hot sandy streets were crowded with drays conveying goods from the wharves to the stores, and from the stores to the Spanish Posadas. The merchants of the place, active, sharp-looking men, were seen grouped under the piazzas in earnest conversation with their Spanish customers, or perched on

the top of the bales and boxes just landed, waiting to hook the gingham-coated, Moorish-looking Dons, as they came along with cigars in their mouths, and a train of negro servants following them with fire buckets on their heads, filled with *pesos fuertes*. The appearance of the town itself was novel and pleasing; the houses, mostly of two stories, looked as if they had been built of cards, most of them being surrounded with piazzas from ten to fourteen feet wide, gaily painted with green and white, and formed by the roofs projecting beyond the brick walls or shells of the houses. On the ground-floor these piazzas are open, and in the lower part of the town, where the houses are built contiguously to each other, they form a covered way, affording a most grateful shelter from the sun, on each side of the streets, which last are unpaved, and more like dry river-courers, than thoroughfares in a Christian town. On the floor above, the balconies are shut in with a sort of moveable blinds, called "Jealousies," like large-bladed Venetian blinds fixed in frames, with here and there a glazed sash to admit light in bad weather when the blinds are closed. In the upper part of the town the effect is very beautiful, every house standing detached from its neighbour, in its little garden filled with vines, fruit-trees, and stately palms, and cocoa-nut trees, with a court of negro houses and offices behind, and a patriarchal-looking draw-well in the centre, generally overshadowed by a magnificent wild tamarind. When I arrived at the great merchant's place of business, I was shown into a lofty cool room, with a range of desks along the walls, where a dozen clerks were quill-driving. In the centre sat my man, a

small sallow, yet perfectly gentleman-like personage. "Dat is massa," quoth my black usher. I accordingly walked up to him, and presented my letter. He never lifted his head from his paper, which I had half a mind to resent; but at the moment there was a bustle in the piazza, and a group of navy officers, amongst whom was the Admiral, came in. My silent friend was now alert enough, and profuse of his bows and smiles. "Who have we here? Who is that boy, L——?" said the Admiral to his secretary. "Young Cringle, sir, the only one except Mr. Splinter saved from the Torch; he was first on the Admiralty list 'tother day."

"What, the lad Willoughby spoke so well of?"

"The same, sir, he got his promotion by last packet."

"I know, I know. I say, Mr. Cringle, you are appointed to the Firebrand, do you know that?"

I did not know it, and began to fear my cruise on shore was all up.

"But I don't look for her from Havanna for a month; so leave your address with L——, that you may get the order to join when she does come.

It appeared that I had seen the worst of the agent, for he gave me a very kind invitation to stay some days with him, and drove me home in his ketureen, a sort of sedan chair, with the front and sides knocked out, and mounted on a gig carriage. Before dinner we were lounging about the piazza, and looking down into the street, when a negro funeral came past, preceded by a squad of drunken black vagabonds, singing and playing on gumbies, African drums, made out of pieces of hollow trees, about six feet long, with

skins braced over them, each carried by one man, while another beat it with his open hands. The coffin was borne along on the heads of two negroes—a negro carries every thing on his head, from a bale of goods to a wine-glass or tea-cup. It is a practice for the bearers, when they come near the house of any one against whom the deceased was supposed to have had a grudge, to pretend that the coffin will not pass by, and in the present case, when they came opposite to where we stood, they began to wheel round and round, and to stagger under the load, while the choristers shouted at the top of their lungs.

“We beg you, shipmate, for come along—do, broder, come away;” then another reel. “What, you no wantee go in a hole, eh? You hab grudge against somebody lif here, eh!”—Another devil of a lurch,—“Massa * * * housekeeper, eh?—Ah, it must be!”—A tremendous stagger—“Oh, Massa * * * dollar for drink; something to hold play” (negro wake) “in Spring-path,” (the negro burying ground;) “Bedi-acko say him won’t pass less you give it.” And here they began to spin round more violently than before; but at the instant a drove of bullocks coming along, they got entangled amongst them, and down went body and bearers and all, the coffin bursting in the fall, and the dead corpse, with its white grave clothes and black face, rolling over and over in the sand amongst the feet of the cattle. It was immediately caught up, however, bundled into the coffin again, and away they staggered, drumming and singing as loudly as before.

The party at dinner was a large one; every thing in good style, wines superb, turtle, &c. magnificent,

and the company exceedingly companionable. A Mr. Francis Fyall, (a great planting attorney, that is, an agent for a number of proprietors of estates, who preferred living in England, and paying a commission to him for managing in Jamaica, to facing the climate themselves,) to whom I had an introduction, rather posed me, by asking me, during dinner, if I would take any thing in the *long way* with him, which he explained by saying he would be glad to take a glass of small beer with me. This, after a deluge of Madeira, Champagne, and all manner of light wines, was rather trying; but I kept my countenance as well as I could. One thing I remember struck me as remarkable, just as we were rising to go to the drawing-room, a cloud of winged ants burst in upon us through the open windows, and had it not been for the glass shades, would have extinguished the candles; but when they had once settled on the table, they deliberately wriggled themselves free of their wings, as one would cast off a great coat, and crept away in their simple and more humble capacity of creeping things. Next day I went to wait on my relation, Mrs. S——; I had had a confoundedly hot walk through the burning sandy streets, and was nearly blinded by the reflection from them, as I ascended the front stairs. There are no carpets in the houses in Jamaica; but the floors, which are often of mahogany, are beautifully polished, and shine like a well-kept dinner table. They are, of course, very slippery, and require wary walking till one gets accustomed to them. The rooms are made exceedingly dark during the heat of the day, according to the prevailing practice in all ardent climates. A black footman, very handsomely dressed;

all to his bare legs, (I thought at first he had black silk stockings on,) preceded me, and when he reached the drawing-room door, asked my name. I told him, "Mr. Cringle"—whereupon he sung out to my dismay—"Massa Captain Ringtail to wait pan Misses."

This put me out a *leetle*—especially as I heard some one say—"Captain who—what a very odd name?"

But I had no time for reflection, as I had not blundered three steps out of the glare of the Piazza, into the palpable obscure of the darkened drawing-room, black as night from the contrast, when I capsized headlong over on ottoman in the middle of the apartment, and floundered right into the middle of a group of young ladies, and one or two lap-dogs, by whom it was conjointly occupied. Trying to recover myself, I slipped on the glasslike floor, and came down stern foremost, and being now regularly at the slack end, for I could not well get lower, I sat still scratching my caput in the midst of a gay company of morning visitors, enjoying the gratifying consciousness that I was distinctly visible to them, although my dazzled optics could as yet distinguish nothing. To add to my pleasurable sensations, I now perceived, from the coldness of the floor, that in my downfall the catastrophe of my unmentionables had been grievously rent, but I had nothing for it but sitting patiently still amidst the suppressed laughter of the company, until I became accustomed to the twilight, and they, like bright stars, began to dawn on my bewildered senses in all their loveliness, and prodigiously handsome women some of them were; for the Creoles, so far as figure is concerned, are generally perfect, while beautiful features are not wanting, and my travel had re-

conciled me to the absence of the rose from their cheeks. My eldest cousin Mary (where is there a name like Mary?) now approached, she and I were old friends, and many a junketing we used to have in my father's house during the holidays, when she was a boarding-school girl in England. My hardihood and self-possession returned, under the double gratification of seeing her, and the certainty that my blushes (for my cheeks were glowing like hot iron) could not have been observed in the subdued green light that pervaded the room.

"Well, Tom, since you are no longer dazzled, and see us all now, you had better get up, had'n't you—you see mamma is waiting there to embrace you?"

"Why, I think myself I had better; but when I broached-to so suddenly, I split my lower canvass, Mary, and I cannot budge until your mother lends me a petticoat."

"A what? are you crazy, Tom?"—

"Not a whit, not a whit, why I have split my—ahem."

"This is speaking plain, an't it?"

Away tripped the sylph-like girl, and in a twinkling re-appeared with the desired garment, which in a convulsion of laughter, she slipped over my head as I sat on the floor; and having fastened it properly round my waist, I rose and paid my respects to my warm-hearted relations. But that petticoat—It could not have been the old woman's; there could have been no such virtue in an old woman's petticoat; no, no, it must either have been a charmed garment, or—or—Mary's own; for, from that hour I was a lost man, and

the devoted slave of her large black eyes, and high pale forehead. "Oh, murder—you speak of the sun dazzling, what is it to the lustre of that same eye of yours, Mary?"

In the evening I escorted the ladies to a ball, (by the way, a West Indian ball-room being a perfect lantern, open to the four winds of heaven, is cooler than a ball-room any where else,) and a very gay affair it turned out to be, although I had more trouble in getting admittance than I bargained for, and was witness to as comical a row (considering the very frivolous origin of it, and the quality of the parties engaged in it) as ever took place even in that peppery country, where, I verily believe, the temper of the people, generous though it be in the main, is hotter than the climate, and it is well known that is sudoriferous enough. I was walking through the entrance saloon with my fair cousin on my arm, stepping out like a hero to the opening crash of a fine military band, towards the entrance of the splendid ball-room filled with elegant company, brilliantly lighted up and ornamented with the most rare and beautiful shrubs and flowers, which no European conservatory could have furnished forth, and arched overhead with palm branches and a profusion of evergreens, while the polished floor, like one vast mirror, reflected the fine forms of the pale but lovely black-eyed and black-haired West Indian dames, glancing amidst the more sombre dresses of their partners, while the whole group was relieved by being here and there spangled with a rich naval or military uniform. As we approached, a constable put his staff across the doorway.

"Beg pardon, sir, but you are not in full dress."

Now this was the first night whereon I had sported my lieutenant's uniform, and with my gold swab on my shoulder, the sparkling bullion glancing in the corner of my eye at the very moment, my dress-sword by my side, gold buckles in my shoes, and spotless white trowsers, I had, in my innocence, considered myself a deuced killing fellow, and felt proportionably mortified at this address.

"No one can be admitted in trowsers, sir," said the man.

"Shiver my timbers!" I could not help the exclamation, the transactions of the morning crowding on my recollection; "shiver my timbers! is my fate in this strange country to be for ever irrevocably bound up in a pair of breeches?"

My cousin pinched my arm.—"Hush, Tom; go home and get mamma's petticoat."

The man was peremptory; and as there was no use in getting into a squabble about such a trifle, I handed my partner over to the care of a gentleman of the party, who was fortunately accoutred according to rule, and, stepping to my quarters, I equipped myself in a pair of tight nether integuments, and returned to the ball-room. By this time there was the devil to pay; the entrance saloon was crowded with military and naval men, high in oath, and headed by no less a person than a general officer, and a one-armed man, one of the chief civil officers in the place, and who had been a sailor in his youth. I was just in time to see the advance of the combined column to the door of the ball-room, through which they drove the picket of constables like chaff, and then halted. The one-

armed functionary, a most powerful and very handsome man, now detached himself from the phalanx, and strode up to the advanced guard of stewards clustered in front of the ladies, who had shrunk together into a corner of the room, like so many frightened hares.

The place being now patent to me, I walked up to comfort my party, and could see all that passed. The champion of the Excluded had taken the precaution to roll up the legs of his trowsers, and to tie them tightly at the knee with his garters, which gave him the appearance of a Dutch skipper; and in all the consciousness of being now properly arrayed, he walked up to one of the men in authority—a small pot-bellied gentleman, and set himself to intercede for the attacking column, the head of which was still lowering at the door. But the little steward speedily interrupted him.

“Why, Mr. —, rules must be maintained, and let me see,”—here he peered through his glass at the substantial supporters of our friend,—“as I live, you yourself are inadmissible.”

The giant laughed.—“D—n the body, he must have been a tailor!—Charge, my fine fellows, and throw the constables out of the window, and the stewards after them. Every man his bird; and here goes for my Cock Robin.” With that he made a grab at his Lilliputian antagonist, but missed him, as he slid away amongst the women like an eel, while his pursuer, brandishing his wooden arm on high, to which I now perceived, for the first time, that there was a large steel hook appended, exclaimed in a broad Scotch accent, “Ah, if I had but caught the *creature*,

I would have clapt this in his mouth, and played him like a salmon."

At this signal, in poured the mass of soldiers and sailors; the constables vanished in an instant; the stewards were driven back upon the ladies; and such fainting and screaming, and swearing and threatening, and shying of cards, and fixing of time and place for a cool turn in the morning, it had never been my good fortune to witness before or since. My wig! thought I, a precious country, where a man's life may be periled by the fashion of the covering to his nakedness!

Next day, Mr. Fyall, who, I afterwards learned, was a most estimable man in substantials, although somewhat eccentric in small matters, called, and invited me to accompany him on a cruise amongst some of the estates under his management. This was the very thing I desired, and three days afterwards I left my kind friends in Kingston, and set forth on my visit to Mr. Fyall, who lived about seven miles from town.

The morning was fine as usual, although about noon the clouds, thin and fleecy and transparent at first, but gradually settling down more dense and heavy, began to congregate on the summit of the Liguanea Mountains, which rises about four miles distant, to a height of nearly five thousand feet, in rear of the town. It thundered, too, a little now and then in the same direction, but this was an every-day occurrence in Jamaica at this season; and as I had only seven miles to go, off I started in a gig of mine host's, with my portmanteau well secured under a tarpawling, in defiance of all threatening appearances, crowding sail,

and urging the noble roan, that had me in tow, close upon thirteen knots. I had not gone above three miles, however, when the sky in a moment changed from the intense glare of a tropical noontide, to the deepest gloom, as if a bad angel had suddenly overshadowed us, and interposed his dark wings between us and the blessed sun; indeed, so instantaneous was the effect, that it reminded me of the withdrawing of the foot-lights in a theatre. The road now wound round the base of a precipitous spur from the Liguanea Mountains, which, far from melting into the level country by gradual and decreasing undulations, shot boldly out nearly a mile from the main range, and that so abruptly, that it seemed morticed into the plain, like a rugged promontory running into a frozen lake. On looking up along the ridge of this prong, I saw the lowering mass of black clouds gradually spread out, and detach themselves from the summits of the loftier mountains, to which they had clung the whole morning, and begin to roll slowly down the hill, seeming to touch the tree tops, while along their lower edges hung a fringe of dark vapour, or rather shreds of cloud in rapid motion, that shifted about, and shot out and shortened like streamers.

As yet, there was no lightning nor rain, and in the expectation of escaping the shower, as the wind was with me, I made more sail, pushing the horse into a gallop, to the great discomposure of the negro who sat beside me. "Massa, you can't escape it, you are galloping into; don't Massa hear de sound of de rain coming along against de wind, and smell de earthy smell of him like one new-made grave?"

"The sound of the rain." In another clime, long,

long ago, I had often read at my old mother's knee, "And Elijah said unto Ahab, There is a *sound* of abundance of rain; prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not: and it came to pass, in the meanwhile, that the heaven was dark with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain."

I looked, and so it was, for in an instant, a white sheet of the heaviest rain I had ever seen, (if rain it might be called, for it was more like a water-spout,) fell from the lower edge of the black cloud, with a strong rushing noise, that increased to a loud roar like that of a waterfall. As it came along, it seemed to devour the rocks and trees, for they disappeared behind the watery skreen the instant it reached them. We saw it ahead of us for more than a mile coming along the road, preceded by a black line from the moistening of the white dust, right in the wind's eye, and with such an even front, that I verily believe it was descending in buckets full on my horse's head, while as yet not one drop had reached me. At this moment, the adjutant-general of the forces, Colonel F——, of the Coldstream Guards, in his tandem, drawn by two sprightly blood bays, with his servant, a light boy, mounted Creole fashion on the leader, was coming up in my wake at a spot where the road sank into a hollow, and was traversed by a water course already running knee deep, although dry as a bone but the moment before.

I was now drenched to the skin, the water pouring out in cascades from both sides of the vehicle, when, just as I reached the top of the opposite bank, there was a flash of lightning so vivid, accompanied by an explosion so loud and tremendous, that my horse, trembling from stem to stern, stood dead still; the

dusky youth by my side jumped out, and buried his snout in the mud, like a porker in Spain, nuzzling for acorns, and I felt more queerish than I would willingly have confessed to. I could have knelt and prayed. The noise of the thunder was a sharp ear-piercing crash, as if the whole vault of heaven had been made of glass, and had been shattered at a blow by the hand of the Almighty.

It was, I am sure, twenty seconds before the usual roar and rumbling from the reverberation of the report from the hills and among the clouds was heard.

I drove on, and arrived just in time to dress for dinner, but I did not learn till next day, that the flash which paralyzed me had struck dead the Colonel's servant and leading horse, as he ascended the bank of the ravine, by this time so much swollen, that the body of the lad was washed off the road into the neighbouring gully, where it was found when the waters subsided, entirely covered with sand. I found the party congregated in the piazza around Mr. Fyall, who was passing his jokes, without much regard to the feelings of his guests, and exhibiting as great a disregard of the common civilities and courtesies of life as can be well imagined. One of the party was a little red-faced gentleman, Peregrine Whiffle, Esquire, by name, who, in Jamaica parlance, was designated an *extraordinary* master in Chancery, the overseer of the pen, or breeding-farm, in the great house, as it is called, or mansion-house, of which Mr. Fyall resided, and a merry, laughing, intelligent, round, red-faced man, with a sort of Duncan Knock-dunder nose, through the wide nostrils of which you could see a cable's length into his head; he was either Fyall's head clerk, or a sort of first lieutenant;

these personages and myself composed the party. The dinner itself was excellent, although rather of the rough-and-round order; the wines and food intrinsically good; but my appetite was not increased by the exhibition of a deformed, bloated negro child, about ten years old, which Mr. Fyall planted at his elbow, and, by way of practical joke, stuffed to repletion with all kinds of food and strong drink, until the little dingy brute was carried out drunk.

The wine circulated freely, and by and by Fyall indulged in some remarkable stories of his youth, for he was the only speaker, which I found some difficulty in swallowing, until at length, on one thumper being tabled, involving an impossibility, and utterly indigestible, I involuntarily exclaimed, "By Jupiter!"

"You want any ting, massa," promptly chimed in the black servant at my elbow, a diminutive kiln-dried old negro.

"No," said I, rather caught.

"Oh, me tink you call for Jupiter."

I looked in the baboon's face—"Why, if I did, what then?"

"Only me Jupiter, at massa sarvice, dat all."

"You are, eh, no great shakes of a Thunderer; and who is that tall square man standing behind your master's chair?"

"Daddy Cupid, massa."

"And the old woman who is carrying away the dishes in the piazza?"

"Mammy Weenus."

"Daddy Cupid, and Mammy Weenus—Shade of Homer!"

Jupiter, to my surprise, shrunk from my side as if

he had received a blow, and the next moment I could hear him communing with Venus in the piazza.

“For true, dat leetle man of war, Buccra, must be Obeah man; how de debil him come to sabé dat it was stable boy, Homer, who broke de candle shade on massa right hand, dat one wid de piece broken out of de edge;” and here he pointed towards it with his *chin*—a negro always points with his chin.

I had never slept on shore before; the night season in the country, in dear old England, we all know is, usually, one of the deepest stillness—here it was any thing but still;—as the evening closed in, there arose a loud humming noise, a compound of the buzzing, and chirping, and whistling, and croaking of numberless reptiles and insects, on the earth, in the air, and in the water. I was awakened out of my first sleep by it, not that the sound was disagreeable, but it was unusual; and every now and then a beetle the size of your thumb would bang in through the open window, cruise round the room with a noise like a humming top, and then dance a quadrille with half-a-dozen bats; while the fire-flies glanced like sparks, spangling the folds of the muslin curtains of the bed. The croak of the tree-toad, too, a genteel reptile, with all the usual loveable properties of his species, about the size of the crown of your hat, sounded from the neighbouring swamp, like some one snoring in the piazza, blending harmoniously with the nasal concert got up by Jupiter, and some other heathen deities, who were sleeping there almost naked, excepting the head, which every negro swathes during the night with as much flannel and as many handkerchiefs as he can command. By the way,

they all slept on their faces—I wonder if the account for their first hours.

Next morning we started at day-break, along at the rate of twelve miles an hour, on a gig, with one horse in the shafts, and another on a breast of him to a sort of standing-out-outrigger, and followed by three mounted men each with a led horse, and two sumpter mules.

In the evening we arrived at an estate under management, having passed a party of natives immediately before. I never saw finer well-strapping fellows, dressed exactly as they should be, and the climate requires; wide dark trousers, these a loose shirt, of dark blue, gathered at waist by a broad leathern belt, through which on side, their short cutlass is stuck, and on the hangs a leathern pouch for ball, a loose bag on one shoulder, supports on the opposite hip a powder horn and haversack. This, with a straw on a march, complete their equipment. In keeping this with the climate, than the padded caps of our regulars. As we drove up to the door, the overseer began to bawl, "Boys, boys!" and the West Indies, be they as old as Methuselah called boys. In the present instance, half-a-dozen black fellows forthwith appeared, to take our luggage and attend on "massa" in other respects. The man was as austere to the poor overseer, as if he been guilty of some misdemeanor, and after a short, crabbed words, desired him to get supper, you hear?"

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they all slept on their faces—I wonder if this will account for their flat noses.

Next morning we started at day-light, cracking along at the rate of twelve knots an hour in a sort of gig, with one horse in the shafts, and another hooked on a-breast of him to a sort of studding-sail-boom, or outrigger, and followed by three mounted servants, each with a led horse, and two sumpter mules.

In the evening we arrived at an estate under his management, having passed a party of maroons immediately before. I never saw finer men,—tall, strapping fellows, dressed exactly as they should be, and the climate requires; wide duck trowsers, over these a loose shirt, of duck also, gathered at the waist by a broad leathern belt, through which, on one side, their short cutlass is stuck, and on the other hangs a leathern pouch for ball, a loose thong across one shoulder, supports on the opposite hip a large powder horn and haversack. This, with a straw hat, and a short gun in their hand, with a sling to be used on a march, complete their equipment. In better keeping this with the climate, than the padded coats, heavy caps, tight crossbelts, and ponderous muskets of our regulars. As we drove up to the door, the overseer began to bawl, “Boys, boys!” and kept blowing a dog-call. All servants in the country in the West Indies, be they as old as Methuselah, are called boys. In the present instance, half-a-dozen black fellows forthwith appeared, to take our luggage, and attend on “massa” in other respects. The great man was as austere to the poor overseer, as if he had been guilty of some misdemeanor, and after a few short, crabbed words, desired him to get supper, “do you hear?”

The meat consisted of plantation fare—salted fish, plantains and yams, and a piece of goat mutton. Another “observe,”—a south-down mutton, after sojourning a year or two here, does not become a goat exactly, but he changes his heavy warm fleece, and wears long hair; and his progeny after him, if bred on the hot plains, never assume the wool again. Mr. Fyall and I sat down, and then in walked four mutes, stout young fellows, not over-well dressed, and with faces burnt to the colour of brick-dust. They were the book-keepers, so called because they *never* see a book, their province being to attend the negroes in the field, and to superintend the manufacture of sugar and rum in the boiling and distilling-houses.

One of them, the Head Book-keeper, as he was called, appeared literally roasted by the intensity of the sun's rays. “How is Baldy Steer?” said the overseer to this person.

“Better to-day, sir—I drenched him with train-oil and sulphur.”

“You did, indeed!” thought I to myself—“alas! for Baldy.”

“And Mary, and Caroline, and the rest of that lot?”—“Are sent to Perkin's Red Rover, sir; but I believe some of them are in calf already by Bull-finch—and I have cut Peter for the Lampas.”

The knife and fork dropped from my hands. What can all this mean? is this their boasted kindness to their slaves? One of a family drenched with train-oil and brimstone, another cut for some horrible complaint never heard of before, called Lampas, and the females sent to the Red Rover, some being in calf already! But I soon perceived that the baked man

was the cowboy or shepherd of the estate, making his report of the casualties amongst his bullocks, mules, and heifers.

"Juliet Ridge will not yield, sir," quoth another. "Who is this next? a stubborn concern *she* must be." "The liquor is very poor." Here he helped himself to rum and water, the rum coming up about an inch in the glass, regular half and half, fit to float a marlinpike.

"It is more than yours is," thought I; and I again stared in wonderment, until I perceived he spoke of the juice of a cane patch.—At this time, a tall, lathy gentleman came in, wearing a most original cut coatee. He was a most extraordinarily built man; he had, absolutely, no body, his bottom being placed between his shoulders, but what was wanted in corpus was made up in legs, indeed he looked like a pair of compasses, buttoned together at the shoulders, and supporting a yellow fiz half a yard long, thatched with a fell of sandy hair falling down lank and greasy on each side of his face. Fyall called him Buckskin, which, with some other circumstances, made me guess that he was neither more nor less than an American smuggler. After supper, a glass of punch was filled for each person; the overseer gave a rap on the table with his knuckles, and off started the book-keepers, like shots out of shovels, leaving the Yankee, Mr. Fyall, the overseer, and myself at table.

I was very tired, and reckoned on going to bed now—but no such thing. Fyall ordered Jupiter to bring a case from his gig box, containing some capital brandy; a new brewage of punch took place, and I found about the small hours that we were all

verging fast towards drunkenness, or something very like that same. The Yankee was specially plied by Fyall, evidently with an object, and he soon succeeded in making him helplessly drunk.

The fun now "grew fast and furious,"—a large wash-tub was ordered in, placed under a beam at the corner of the room, and filled with water; a sack and a three inch rope were then called for, and promptly produced by the Blackies, who, apparently accustomed to Fyall's pranks, grinned with delight. Buckskin was thrust into the sack, feet foremost; the mouth of it was then gathered round his throat with a string, and I was set to splice a bight in the rope, so as to fit under his arms without running, which might have choked him. All things being prepared, the slack end was thrown over the beam. He was soused in the tub, the word was given to hoist away, and we ran him up to the roof, and then belayed the rope round the body of the overseer, who was able to sit on his chair, and that was all. The cold bath, and the being hung up to dry, speedily sobered the American, but his arms being within the sack, he could do nothing for his own emancipation; he kept swearing, however, and entreating, and dancing with rage, every jerk drawing the cord tighter round the waist of the overseer, who, unaware of his situation, thought himself bewitched as he was drawn with violence by starts along the floor, with the chair, as it were, glued to him. At length the patient extricated one of his arms, and laying hold of the beam above him, drew himself up, and then letting go his hold suddenly, fairly lifted the drunken overseer, chair and all, several feet from the ground, so as to bring him on a level with himself, and then, in mid air, be-

gan to pummel his counterpoise with right good-will. At length, fearful of the consequences, from the fury into which the man had worked himself, Fyall and I dashed out the candles, and fled to our rooms, where, after barricading the doors, we shouted to the servants to let the gentlemen down.

The next morning had been fixed for duck-shooting, and the overseer and I were creeping along amongst the mangrove bushes on the shore to get a shot at some teal, when we saw our friend the pair of compasses, crossing the small bay in his boat towards his little pilot-boat-built schooner, which was moored in a small creek opposite, the brushwood concealing every thing but her masts. My companion, as wild an Irishman as I ever knew, hailed him,—

“Hillo, Obadiah—Buckskin—you Yankee rascal, heave to. Come ashore here—come ashore.”

Obed, smoking his pipe, deliberately uncoiled himself—I thought, as he rose, there was to be no end of him—and stood upright in the boat, like an ill-rigged jury-mast.

“I say, Master Tummas, you ben’t no friend of mine, I guess, a’ter last night’s work; you hears how I coughs,”—and he began to wheeze and crow in a most remarkable fashion.

“Never mind,” rejoined the overseer; “if you go round that point, and put up the ducks, by the piper, but I’ll fire at you!”

Obed neighed like a horse expecting his oats, which was meant as a laugh of derision. “Do you think your birding-piece can touch me here away, Master Tummas?” Whereupon he *nichered* more loudly than before.

“Don’t provoke me to try you, you yellow snake, you!”

"Try, and be d—d, and there's a mark for thee," unveiling a certain part of his body, *not* his face.

The Overseer, or *Busha*, to give him his Jamaica name, looked at me and smiled, then coolly lifted his long Spanish barrel, and fired. Down dropped the smuggler, and ashore came the boat.

"I am mortally wounded, Master Tummas," quoth Obed; and I was confoundedly frightened at first, from the unusual proximity of the injured part to his head; but the overseer, as soon as he could get off the ground, where he had thrown himself in an uncontrollable fit of laughter, had the man stripped and laid across a log, where he set his servant to pick out the pellets with a penknife.

Next night I was awakened out of my first sleep by a peculiar sort of tap, tap, on the floor, as if a cat, with walnut shells, had been moving about the room. The feline race, in all its varieties, is my detestation, so I slipped out of bed to expel the intruder, but the instant my toe touched the ground, it was seized as if by a smith's forceps. I drew it into bed, but the annoyance followed it; and in an agony of alarm and pain, I thrust my hand down, when my thumb was instantly manacled to the other suffering member. I now lost my wits altogether, and roared murder, which brought a servant in with a light, and there I was, thumb and toe, in the clinch of a land-crab.

I had been exceedingly struck with the beauty of the negro villages on the old settled estates, which are usually situated in the most picturesque spots, and I determined to visit the one which lay on a sunny bank, full in view from my window, divided on two sides from the cane pieces by a precipitous ravine, and on the other two by a high logwood hedge, so like haw-

thorn, that I could scarcely tell the difference, even when close to it.

At a distance it had the appearance of one entire orchard of fruit trees, where were mingled together, the pyramidal orange in fruit and in flower, the former in all its stages from green to dropping ripe,—the citron, lemon, and lime-trees, the stately, glossy-leaved star-apple, the golden shaddock and grape-fruit, with their slender branches bending under their ponderous yellow fruit,—the cashew, with its apple like those of the cities of the plain, fair to look at, but acrid to the taste, to which the far-famed nut is appended like a bud,—the avocado, with its Brobdignag pear, as large as a purser's lantern,—the bread-fruit, with a leaf that would have covered Adam like a Bishop's apron, and a fruit for all the world in size and shape like a blackamoor's head; while for under-wood you had the green, fresh, dew-spangled plantain, round which, in the hottest day, there is always a halo of coolness,—the cocoa root, the yam, and granadillo, with their long vines twining up the neighbouring trees and shrubs like hop tendrils,—and peas and beans, in all their endless variety of blossom and of odour, from the Lima bean, with a stalk as thick as my arm, to the mouse pea, three inches high,—the pine-apple, literally growing in, and constituting, with its prickly leaves, part of the hedgerows,—the custard-apple, like russet bags of cold pudding,—the cocoa and coffee bushes, and a great variety of all that is delightful in nature besides; while aloft, the tall graceful cocoa nut, the majestic palm, and the gigantic wild cotton tree, shot up here and there like maranets far above the rest, high into the blue heavens.

I entered one of the narrow, winding footpaths, where an immense variety of convolvuli crept along the penguin fences, disclosing their delicate flowers in the morning freshness, (all that class here shut shop at noon,) and passion flowers of all sizes, from a soup-plate to a thumb-ring. The huts were substantially thatched with palm leaves, and the walls woven with a basket work of twigs, plastered over with clay, and white-washed; the floors were of baked clay, dry, and comfortable. They all consisted of a hall and a sleeping-room off each side of it; in many of the former I noticed mahogany side-boards, and chairs, and glass decanters, while a whole lot of African drums and flutes, and sometimes a good gun, hung from the rafters; and it would have gladdened an Irishman's heart to have seen the adjoining piggeries. Before one of the houses an old woman was taking care of a dozen black infants, little, naked, glossy, black Guinea pigs, with parti-coloured beads tied round their loins, each squatted like a little Indian pagod in the middle of a large wooden bowl, to keep it off the damp ground. While I was pursuing my ramble, a large conch shell was blown at the overseer's house, and the different gangs turned in to dinner; they came along dancing and shouting, and playing tricks on each other in the little paths, in all the happy anticipation of a good dinner, and an hour and a half to eat it in, the men well clad in Osnaburg frocks and trowsers, and the women in baize petticoats and Osnaburg shifts, with a neat-printed calico short gown over all. "And these are slaves," thought I; "*and this is West Indian bondage!* Oh, that some of my well-meaning anti-slavery friends were here, to judge from the evidence of their own senses!"

The following night there was to be a grand play or wake in the negro houses, over the head cooper, who had died in the morning, and I determined to be present at it, although the overseer tried to dissuade me, saying that no white person ever broke in on these orgies, that the negroes were very averse to their doing so, and that neither he, nor any of the white people on the estate, had ever been present on such an occasion. This very interdict excited my curiosity still more; so I rose about midnight, and let myself gently down through the window, and shaped my course in the direction of the negro houses, guided by a loud drumming, which, as I came nearer, every now and then sank into a low murmuring roll, when a strong bass voice would burst forth into a wild recitative; to which succeeded a loud piercing chorus of female voices, during which the drums were beaten with great vehemence; this was succeeded by another solo, and so on. There was no moon, and I had to thread my way along one of the winding footpaths by star-light. When I arrived within a stone-cast of the hut before which the play was being held, I left the beaten track, and crept onwards, until I gained the shelter of the stem of a wild cotton tree, behind which I skulked unseen.

The scene was wild enough. Before the door a circle was formed by about twenty women, all in their best clothes, sitting on the ground, and swaying their bodies to and fro, while they sung in chorus the wild dirge already mentioned, the words of which I could not make out; in the centre of the circle sat four men playing on gumbies, or the long drum already described, while a fifth stood behind them, with a conch shell, which he kept sounding at inter-

vals. Other three negroes kept circling round the outer verge of the circle of women, naked all to their waist cloths, spinning about and about with their hands above their heads, like so many dancing dervishes. It was one of these three that from time to time took up the recitative, the female chorus breaking in after each line. Close to the drummers lay the body in an open coffin, supported on two low stools or tresses; a piece of flaming resinous wood was stuck in the ground at the head, and another at the feet, and a lump of kneaded clay, in which another torch-like splinter was fixed, rested on the breast. An old man, naked like the solo singer, was digging a grave close to where the body lay. The following was the chant:—

"I say, broder, you can't go yet."

CHORUS OF FEMALE VOICES.

"When de morning star rise, den we put you in a hole."

CHORUS.

"Den you go in a Africa, you see Fetish dere."

CHORUS.

"You shall nyam goat dere, wid all your family."

CHORUS.

"Buccra can't come dere; say, dam rascal, why you no work?"

CHORUS.

"Buccra can't catch Duppy,* no, no."

CHORUS.

Three calabashes, or gourds, with pork, yams, and rum, were placed on a small bench that stood close to the head of the bier, and at right angles to it.

In a little while, the women, singing men, and drummers, suddenly gave a loud shout, or rather

* Duppy, *Ghost*.

yell, clapped their hands three times, and then rushed into the surrounding cottages, leaving the old gravedigger alone with the body.

He had completed the grave, and had squatted himself on his hams beside the coffin, swinging his body as the women had done, and uttering a low moaning sound, frequently ending in a loud *pech*, like that of a pavior, when he brings down his rammer.

I noticed he kept looking towards the east, watching, as I conjectured, the first appearance of the morning star, but it was as yet too early.

He lifted the gourd with the pork, and took a large mouthful.

"How is dis? I can't put dis meat in quacco's coffin, dere is salt in de pork; Duppy can't bear salt," another large mouthful—"Duppy hate salt too much,"—here he ate it all up, and placed the empty gourd in the coffin. He then took up the one with boiled yam in it, and tasted it also.

"Salt here too—who de debil do such a ting?—must not let Duppy taste dat." He discussed this also, placing the empty vessel in the coffin as he had done with the other. He then came to the calabash with the rum. There is no salt there, thought I.

"Rum! ah, Duppy love rum—if it be well strong, let me see—Massa Niger, who put water in dis rum, eh? Duppy will never touch dat"—a long pull—"no, no, never touch dat." Here he finished the whole, and placed the empty vessel beside the others; then gradually sunk back on his hams with his mouth open, and his eyes starting from the sockets, as he peered up into the tree, apparently at some terrible object. I looked up also, and saw a large yellow

snake, nearly ten feet long, let itself gradually down, directly over the coffin, with its tail round a limb of the cotton tree, until its head reached within an inch of the dead man's face, which it licked with its long forked tongue, uttering a loud hissing noise.

I was fascinated with horror, and could not move a muscle; at length the creature swung itself up again, and disappeared amongst the branches.

Quashie gained courage, as the rum began to operate, and the snake to disappear. "Come to catch Quacco's Duppy, before him get to Africa, sure as can be. De metody parson say de devil, old sarpant, dat must be old sarpant, for I never see so big one, so it must be devil."

He caught a glimpse of my face at this moment; it seemed that I had no powers of fascination, like the snake, for he roared out, "Murder, murder, de devil, de devil, first like a sarpent, den like himself; see him white face behind de tree; see him white face behind de tree;" and then, in the extremity of his fear, he popt head-foremost into the grave, leaving his quivering legs, and feet sticking upwards, as if he had been planted by the head.

A number of negroes ran out of the nearest houses, and, to my surprise, four white seamen appeared amongst them, who, the moment they got sight of my uniform, as I ran away, gave chase, and immediately pinioned me. They were all armed, and I had no doubt were part of the crew of the smuggling schooner, and that they had a depot amongst the negro houses. "Yo ho, my hearty, heave to, or here goes with a brace of bullets."

I told them who I was, and that curiosity alone brought me there.

"Gammon, tell that to the marines; you're a spy, messmate, and on board you go with us, so sure as I be Paul Brandywine."

Here was a change with a vengeance. An hour before I was surrounded by friends, and resting comfortably in my warm bed, and now I was a prisoner to a set of brigands, who were smugglers at the best, and what might they not be at the worst? I had no chance of escape by any sudden effort of strength or activity, for a piece of a handspike had been thrust across my back, passing under both of my arms, which were tightly lashed to it, as if I had been trussed for roasting, so that I could no more run, with a chance of escape, than a goose without his pinions. After we left the negro houses, I perceived, with some surprise, that my captors kept the beaten track, leading directly to, and past the overseer's dwelling. "Come, here is a chance, at all events," argued I to myself. "If I get within hail, I will alarm the lieges, if a deuced good pipe don't fail me."

This determination had scarcely been framed in my mind, when, as if my very thoughts had been audible, the smuggler next me on the right hand drew a pistol, and held it close to my starboard ear.

"Friend, if you tries to raise the house, or speaks to any Niger, or other person we meets, I'll walk through your skull with two ounces of lead."

"You are particularly obliging," said I; "but what do you promise yourselves by carrying me off? Were you to murder me, you would be none the richer; for I have no valuables about me, as you may easily ascertain by searching me."

"And do you think that freeborn Americans like we have kidnapped you for your dirty rings, and

watch, and mayhap a few dollars, which I take's you to mean by your waluboles, as you calls them?"

"Why, then, *what*, in the devil's name, have you kidnapped me for?" And I began to feel my choler overpowering my discretion, when Master Paul Brandywine, who I now suspected to be the mate of the smuggler, took the small liberty of jerking the land-yard, that had been made fast to the middle of the handspike, so violently, that I thought both my shoulders were dislocated; for I was fairly checked down on my back, just as you may have seen a pig-merchant on the Fermoy road bring an uproarious boar to his marrow-bones; while the man, who had previously threatened to blow my brains out, knelt beside me, and civilly insinuated, that "if I was tired of my life, he calculated I had better speak as loud again."

There was no jest in all this; so I had nothing for it but to walk silently along with my escort, after having gathered myself up as well as I could. We crept so close under the windows of the overseer's house, where we picked up a lot of empty ankers, slung on a long pole, that I fancied I heard, or really did hear some one snore—oh, how I envied the sleeper! At length we reached the beach, where we found two men lying on their oars, in what, so far as I could distinguish, appeared to be a sharp swift-looking whale boat, which they kept close to, with her head forward, however, to be ready for a start, should any thing suspicious appear close to them.

The boat-keeper hailed promptly, "Who goes there," as they feathered their oars.

"The Tidy little wave," was the answer.

No more words passed, and the men who had, in the first instance, pulled a stroke or two to give the

boat way, now backed water, and tailed her on to the beach, when we all stepped on board.

Two of my captors now took each an oar; we shoved off, and glanced away through the darkness, along the smooth surface of the sparkling sea, until we reached the schooner, by this time hauled out into the fair way at the mouth of the cove, where she lay hove short, with her mainsail hoisted up, riding to the land-wind, and apparently all ready to cant and be off the moment the boat returned.

As we came alongside, the Captain of her, my friend Obediah, as I had no difficulty in guessing, from his very out of the way configuration, dark as it was, called out, "I says, Paul, who have you got in the starn-sheets there?"

"A bloody spy, Captain; he who was with the overseer when he peppered your sheathing t'other morning."

"Oho, bring him on board—bring him on board. I know there be a man-of-war schooner close aboard of the island, somewheres hereabouts. I sees through it all, smash my eyes!—I sees through it.—But what kept you, Paul? Don't you see the morning star has risen."

By this time I stood on the deck of the little vessel, which was not above a foot out of the water; and Obediah, as he spoke, pointed to the small dark pit of a companion, for there was no light below, nor indeed any where on board, except in the binnacle, and that carefully masked, indicating by his threatening manner, that I was to get below as speedily as possible.

"Don't you see the morning star, sir? Why the sun will be up in an hour, I calculate, and then the

sea-breeze will be down on us before we get any thing of an offing."

The mention of the morning star recalled vividly to my recollection the scene I had so recently witnessed at the negro wake; it seemed there was another person beside poor Quacco, likely to be crammed into a hole before the day broke, and to be carried to Africa, too, for what I knew; but one must needs go when the devil drives, so I slipped down into the cabin, and the schooner having weighed, made sail to the northward.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHASE OF THE SMUGGLER.

THE crib in which I was confined was as dark as pitch, and, as I soon found, as hot as the black hole in Calcutta. I don't pretend to be braver than my neighbours, but I would pluck any man by the beard who called me coward. In my small way I had in my time faced death in various shapes; but it had always been above board, with the open heaven overhead, and generally I had a goodly fellowship in danger, and the eyes of others were upon me. No wonder, then, that the sinking of the heart within me, which I now experienced for the first time, was bitter exceedingly, and grievous to be borne. Cooped up in a small suffocating cabin, scarcely eight feet square, and not above four feet high, with the certainty of being murdered, as I conceived, were I to try to force my way on deck; and the knowledge that all my earthly prospects, all my dreams of promotion, were likely to be blasted, and for ever ruined by my sudden spiriting away, not to take into the heavy tale the misery which my poor mother and my friends must suffer, when they came to know it, and "who will tell this to thee, Mary," rose to my throat, but could get no farther for a cursed bump that was like to throttle me. Why should I blush to own it—when the gipsy, after all, jinked an old rich goutified

coffee-planter at the eleventh hour, and married me, and is now the mother of half-a-dozen little Cringles or so? However, I made a strong effort to bear my misfortunes like a man, and, folding my arms, I sat down on a chest to abide my fate, whatever that might be, with as much composure as I could command, when half-a-dozen cockroaches flew flicker, flicker, against my face.

For the information of those who have never seen this delicious insect, I take leave to mention here, that, when full grown, it is a large dingy-coloured beetle, about two inches long, with six legs, and two feelers as long as its body. It has a strong antihysterical flavour, something between rotten cheese and assafoetida, and seldom stirs abroad when the sun is up, but lies concealed in the most obscure and obscene crevice it can creep into; so that, when it is seen, its wings and body are thickly covered with dust and dirt of various shades, which any culprit who chances to fall asleep with his mouth open, is sure to reap the benefit of, as it has a great propensity to walk into it, partly for the sake of the crumbs adhering to the masticators, and also, apparently, with a scientific desire to inspect, by accurate ad-measurement with the aforesaid antennæ, the state and condition of the whole potato trap.

At the same time I felt something gnawing the toe of my boot, which I inferred to be a rat—another agreeable customer, for which I had a special abhorrence; but, as for beetles of all kinds, from my boyhood up, they had been an abomination unto me, and a cockroach is the most abominable of all beetles; so between the two I was speedily roused from my state of supine, or rather dogged endurance; and, forget-

ting the geography of my position, I sprang to my feet, whereby I nearly fractured my skull against the low deck above. I first tried the sky-light; it was buttoned down—then the companion hatch, it was locked—but the ladder leading up to it, being cooler than the noisome vapour bath I had left, I remained standing in it, trying to catch a mouthful of fresh air through the joints of the door. All this while we had been slipping along shore with the land wind abeam of us, at the rate of five or six knots, but so gently and silently, that I could distinctly hear the roar of the surf, as the long smooth swell broke on the beach, which, from the loudness of the noise, could not be above a mile to windward of us. I perceived, at the same time, that the schooner, although going free, did not keep away as she might have done, so that it was evident he did not intend to beat up, so as to fetch the Crooked Island passage, which would have been his course, had he been bound for the States; but was standing over to the Cuba shore, at that time swarming with pirates.

It was now good daylight, and the *Terral* gradually died away, and left us rolling gunwale under, as we rose and fell on the long seas, with our sails flapping, bulkheads creaking and screaming, and main-boom jig-jiging, as if it would have torn every thing to pieces. I could hear my friend Obed walking the deck, and whistling manfully for the sea breeze, and exclaiming from time to time in his barbarous lingo, "Souffle, souffle, San Antonio." But the saint had no bowels, and there we lay roasting until near ten o'clock in the forenoon. During all this period, Obed, who was short-sighted, as I learned afterwards, kept desiring his right arm, Paul Brandywine, to keep a

bright look-out for the sea breeze to windward, or rather to the eastward, for there was no wind "because he knowed it oftentimes tumbled down right sudden and dangerous at this season about the corner of the Island hereabouts; and the pride of the morning often brought a shower with it, fit to level a maize plat smooth as his hand."—"No black clouds to windward yet, Paul?"

Paul could see nothing, and the question was repeated three or four times. "There is a small black cloud about the size of my hand to windward, sir, right in the wake of the sun; just now, but it won't come to any thing; I sees no signs of any wind."

"And Elijah said to his servant, Go up now, and look toward the sea, and he went up and looked, and said, There is nothing; and he said, Go again seven times: and it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, Behold there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand."

I knew what this foreboded, which, as I thought, was more than friend Obed did; for he shortened no sail, and kept all his kites abroad, for no use, as it struck me, unless he wished to wear them out by flapping against the masts. He was, indeed, a strange mixture of skill and carelessness; but, when fairly stirred up, one of the most daring and expert, and self-possessed seamen I had ever seen, as I very soon had an ugly opportunity of ascertaining.

The cloud on the horizon continued to rise rapidly, spreading over the whole eastern sky, and the morning began to lower very ominously; but there was no sudden squall, the first of the breeze coming down as usual in cats' paws, and freshening gradually; nor did I expect there would be, although I was

certain it would soon blow a merry capfull of wind, which might take in some of the schooner's small sails, and pretty considerably bether us, unless we could better our offing speedily, for it blew right on shore, which, by the setting in of the sea breeze, was now close under our lee.

At length the sniffer reached us, and the sharp little vessel began to *speak*, as the rushing sound through the water is called; while the wind sang like an Eolian harp through the taught weather rigging. Presently I heard the word given to take in the two gaff topsails and flying jib, which was scarcely done, when the moaning sound roughened into a roar, and the little vessel began to yerk at the head seas, as if she would have cut through them, in place of rising to them, and to lie over, as if Davy Jones himself had clapperclawed the mast heads, and was in the act of using them as levers to capsize her, while the sails were tugging at her, as if they would have torn the spars out of her, so that I expected every moment, either that she would turn over, keel up, or that the masts would snap short off by the deck.

All this, which I would without the smallest feeling of dread, on the contrary with exhilaration, have faced cheerily on deck in the course of duty, proved, at the time, under my circumstances, most alarming and painful to me; a fair strae death out of the main-top, or off the weather-yard arm, would, to my imagination, have been an easy exit comparatively, but to be choked in this abominable hole, and drowned darkling like a blind puppy—the very thought made me frantic, and I shouted and tumbled about, until I missed my footing and fell backwards down the ladder, from the bottom of which I scuttled away to the

lee-side of the cabin, quiet, through absolute despair and exhaustion from the heat and closeness.

I had remarked that from the time the breeze freshened, the everlasting Yankee drawling of the crew, and the endless confabulation of the captain and his mate, had entirely ceased, and nothing was now heard on deck but the angry voice of the raging elements, and, at intervals, a shrill piercing word or two from Obed, in the altered tone of which I had some difficulty in recognising his pipe, which rose clear and distinct above the roar of the sea and wind, and was always answered by a prompt, sharp "aye, aye, sir," from the men. There was no circumlocution, nor calculating, nor guessing now, but all hands seemed to be doing their duty energetically and well. "Come, the vagabonds are sailors after all, we shan't be swamped this turn;" and I resumed my place on the companion ladder, with more ease of mind, and a vast deal more composure than when I was pitched from it when the squall came on. In a moment after, I could hear the captain sing out, loud, even above the howling of the wind and rushing of the water, "There it comes at last—put your helm hard aport—down with it, Paul, down with it, man—luff, and shake the wind out of her sails, or over we goes, clean and for ever." Every thing was jammed, nothing could be let go, nor was there an axe at hand to make short work with the sheets and halyards; and for a second or two I thought it was all over, the water rushing half way up her decks, and bubbling into the companion, through the crevices; but at length the lively little craft came gaily to the wind, shaking her plumage like a wild duck; the sails were got in, all to the foresail, which was set with the

bonnet off, and then she lay-to like a sea-gull, without shipping a drop of water. In the comparative stillness, I could now distinctly hear every word that was said on deck.

"Pretty near it; rather close shaving that same, captain," quoth Paul, with a congratulatory chuckle; "but I say, sir, what is that wreath of smoke rising from Annotta Bay over the headland?"

"Why, how should I know, Paul? Negroes burning brush, I guess."

"The smoke from brushwood never rose and flew over the bluff with that swirl, I calculate; it is a gun, or I mistake."

And he stepped to the companion for the purpose, as I conceived, of taking out the spy-glass, which usually hangs there in brackets fitted to hold it; he undid the hatch and pushed it back, when I popped my head out, to the no small dismay of the mate; but Obed was up to me, and while with one hand he seized the glass, he ran the sliding top sharp up against my neck, till he pinned me into a kind of pillory, to my great annoyance; so I had to beg to be released, and once more slunk back into my hole. There was a long pause; at length, Paul, to whom the skipper had handed the spy-glass, spoke.

"A schooner, sir, is rounding the point."

As I afterwards learned, the negroes who had witnessed my capture, especially the old man who had taken me for his infernal majesty, had raised the alarm, so soon as they could venture down to the overseer's house, which was on the smuggling boat shoving off, and Mr. Fyall immediately despatched an express to the lieutenant commanding the Gleam,

then lying in Annotta bay, about ten miles distant, when she instantly slipped and shoved out.

"Well, I can't help it, if there be," rejoined the captain.

Another pause.

"Why, I don't like her, sir; she looks like a man-of-war—and that must have been the smoke of the gun she fired on weighing."

"Eh?" sharply answered Obed, "if it be, it will be a hanging matter if we are caught with this young splice on board; he may belong to her for what I know. Look again, Paul."

A long, long look.

"A man-of-war schooner, sure enough, sir; I can see her ensign and pennant, now that she is clear of the land."

"Shiver my timbers!" cried Obed, in great perplexity, "what shall we do now?"

"Why, pull foot, captain, promptly replied Paul; "the breeze has lulled, and in light winds she will have no chance with the tidy little Wave."

I could now perceive that the smugglers made all sail, and I heard the frequent swish-swish of the water, as they threw bucketsfull on the sails, to thicken them, and make them hold more wind, while we edged away, keeping as close to the wind, however, as we could, without stopping her way.

"Starboard," quoth Obed—"rap full, Jem—let her walk through it, my boy—there, main and fore-sail, flat as boards; why, she will stand the main-gaff topsail yet—set it, Paul, set it;" and his heart warmed as he gained confidence in the qualifications of his vessel. "Come, weather me now, see how

she trips it along—poo, I was an ass to quail, wan't I Paul?" No chance, now, thought I, as I descended once more; "I may as well go and be suffocated at once." I knocked my foot against something, in stepping off the ladder, which, on putting down my hand, I found to be a tinder box, with steel and flint. I had formerly ascertained there was a candle in the cabin, on the small table, stuck into a bottle; so I immediately struck a light, and as I knew that meekness and solicitation, having been tried in vain, would not serve me, I determined to go on the other tack, and to see how far an assumption of coolness and self-possession, or, it might be, a dash of bravado, whether true or feigned, might not at least ensure me some consideration and better treatment from the lawless gang into whose hands I had fallen.

So I set to and ransacked the lockers, where, amongst a vast variety of miscellaneous matters, I was not long in finding a bottle of very tolerable rum, some salt junk, some biscuit, and a *goglet* or porous earthen jar of water, with some capital cigars. By this time I was like to faint with the heat and smell; so I filled a tumbler with good half and half, and swigged it off. The effect was speedy; I thought I could eat a bit, so I attacked the salt junk and made a hearty meal, after which I replenished my tumbler, lighted a cigar, pulled off my coat and waistcoat, and, with a sort of desperate glee, struck up at the top of my pipe, "Ye Mariners of England." My jovialty was soon noticed on deck.

"Eh, what be that?" quoth Obed, "that be none of our ditties, I guess? who is singing below there?"

"We be all on deck, sir," responded Paul.

"It can't be the spy, eh?—sure enough it must be

he, and no one else; the heat and choke must have made him mad."

"We shall soon see," said Paul, as he removed the sky-light, and looked down into the cabin.

Obed looked over his shoulder, peering at me with his little short-sighted pig's eyes, into which, in my pot valiancy, I immediately chucked half-a-tumbler of very strong grog, and under cover of it attempted to bolt through the scuttle, and thereby gain the deck; but Paul, with his shoulder of mutton fist, gave me a very unceremonious rebuff, and down I dropped again.

"You makes yourself at home, I sees, and be hanged to you," said Obed, laying the emphasis on the last word, pronouncing it "you—oo" in two syllables.

"I do, indeed, and be d——d to you—oo," I replied; "and why should I not? the visit was not volunteered, you know; so come down, you long-legged Yankee, smuggling scoundrel, or I'll blow your bloody buccaneering craft out of the water like the peel of an onion. You see I have got the magazine scuttle up, and *there* are the barrels of powder, and here is the candle, so"——

Obed laughed like the beginning of the bray of the jackass before he swings off into his "heehaw"—

"Smash my eyes, man, but them barrels be full of pimento, all but that one with the red mark, and that be crackers fresh and sharp from the Brandywine mills."

"Well, well, gunpowder, or pimento, I'll set fire to it if you don't be civil."

"Why, I *will* be civil; you are a curious chap, a

brave slip to carry it so, with no friend near; so, civil I will be."

He unlocked the companion hatch and came down to the cabin, doubling his long limbs up like foot rules, to suit the low roof.

"Free and easy, my man," continued the captain, as he entered. "Well, I forgive you—we are quits now—and if we were not beyond the Island Craft, I would put you ashore, but I can't stand back now."

"Why, may I ask?"

"Simply, because one of your men-of-war schooners an't more than hull down astarn of me at this moment; she is working up in shore, and has not chased me as yet; indeed, she may save herself the trouble, for ne'er a schooner in your blasted sarvice has any chance with the tidy little Wave."

I was by no means so sure of this.

"Well, Master Obediah, it may turn up as you say, and, in a light wind, I know you will either sail or sweep away from any one of them: but, to be on the square with you, if it comes on to blow, that same hooker, which I take to be his Britannic Majesty's schooner, Gleam, will, from his greater beam, and superior length, outcarry and fore-reach on you, aye, and weather on you too, hand over hand; so this is my compact—if he nails you, you will require a friend at Court, and I will stand that friend; if you escape—and I will not interfere, either by advice or otherwise, either to get you taken or to get you clear—will you promise to put me on board the first English merchant vessel we fall in with, or, at the longest, to land me at St. Jago de Cuba, and I will promise you, on my honour, notwithstanding all that has

been said or done, that I will never hereafter inform against you, or in any way get you into trouble, if I can help it. Is it done? Will you give me your hand upon it?"

Obed did not hesitate a moment; he clenched my hand and squeezed it, till the blood nearly spouted from my finger ends; one might conceive of Norwegian bears greeting each other after this fashion, but I trust no Christian will ever, in time coming, subject my digits to a similar species of torture.

"Agreed, my boy, I *have* promised, and you may depend on me; smuggler though I be, and somewhat worse on occasion mayhap, I never breaks my word."

There was an earnestness about the poor fellow, in which I thought there could be no deception, and from that moment we were on what I may call a very friendly footing for a prisoner and his jailer.

"Well, now, I believe you, so let us have a glass of grog, and"—

Here the mate sang out, "Captain, come on deck, if you please: quickly, sir, quickly."

By this time it had begun to breeze up again, and as the wind *rose*, I could see the spirits of the crew *fell*, as if conscious they had no chance if it freshened. When we went on deck, Paul was still peering through the telescope.

"The schooner has tacked, sir." A dead silence: then giving the glass a swing, and driving the joints into each other, with such vehemence as if he would have broken them in pieces, he exclaimed, "She is after us, so sure as I ben't a niger."

"No! is she though?" eagerly inquired the captain, as he at length seized the spy-glass, twisting and turning it about and about, as he tried to hit his

own very peculiar focus. At length he took a long, long, breathless look, while the eyes of the whole crew, some fifteen hands or so, were riveted upon him with the most intense anxiety.

"What a gaff-topsail she has got—my eye!—and a ringtail with more cloths in it than our square sail: and the breeze comes down stronger and stronger!"

All this while I looked out equally excited, but with a very different interest. "Come, this will do," thought I; "she is after us; and if old Dick Gasket brings that fiery sea breeze he has now along with him, we shall puzzle the smuggler, for all his long start."

"There's a gun, sir," cried Paul, trembling from head to foot.

"Sure enough," said the skipper; "and it must be a signal. And there go three flags at the fore.—She must, I'll bet a hundred dollars, have taken our tidy little Wave for the Admiral's tender that was lying in Morant Bay."

"Blarney," thought I; "tidy as your little Wave is, she won't deceive old Dick—he is not the man to take a herring for a horse; she *must* be making signals to some man-of-war in sight."

"A strange sail right a-head," sung out three men from forward all at once.

"Didn't I say so?"—I had only *thought* so.—"Come, master Obediah, it thickens now, you're in for it," said I.

But he was not in the least shaken; as the matter grew serious, he seemed to brace up to meet it. He had been flurried at the first, but he was collected and cool as a cucumber, *now*, when he saw every thing depending on his seamanship and judgment.

Not so Paul, who seemed to have made up his mind that they must be taken.

"Jezebel Brandywine, you are but a widowed old lady, I calculate. I shall never see the broad, smooth Chesapeake again, no more peach brandy for Paul;" and folding his arms, he set himself doggedly down on the low taffarel.

Little did I think at the time how fearfully the poor fellow's foreboding was so soon to be fulfilled.

"There again," said I, "a second puff to windward." This was another signal gun, I knew; and I went forward to where the captain was reconnoitring the sail a-head through a glass. "Let me see," said I, "and I will be honest with you, and tell you if I know her."

He handed me the glass at once, and the instant I saw the top of her courses above the water, I was sure, from the red cross in her foresail, that she was the Firebrand, the very corvette to which I was appointed. She was so well to windward, that I considered it next to impossible that we should weather her, but Obediah seemed determined to try it. After seeing his little vessel snug under mainsail, foresail, and jib, which was as much as she could stagger under, and every thing right and tight, and all clear to make more sail should the breeze lull, he ordered the men below, and took the helm himself. What queer animals sailors are! We were rising the corvette fast; and on going aft again, from the bows, where I had been looking at her, I sent my eye down the hatchway into the men's birth, and there were the whole crew at breakfast, laughing and joking, and enjoying themselves as heartily, apparently, nay, I verily believe, in reality, as if they had been in a yacht, on a

cruise of pleasure, in place of having one enemy nearly within gunshot astern, and another trying to cut them off a-head.

At this moment the schooner in chase luffed up in the wind, and I noticed the foot of the foresail lift. "You'll have it now, friend Obed; there's at you in earnest." While I spoke, a column of thick white smoke spouted over the bows of the Gleam, about twenty yards to windward, and then blew back again amongst the sails and rigging, as if a gauze veil had for an instant been thrown over the little vessel, rolling off down the wind to leeward, in whirling eddies; growing thinner and thinner, until it disappeared altogether. I heard the report this time, and the shot fell close along side of us.

"A good mark with that apple," coolly observed the captain; "the long Tom must be a tearer to pitch its mouthful of iron this length."

Another succeeded; and if I had been still pinned up in the companion, there would have been no log now, for it went crash through it into the hold. "Go it, my boys," shouted I; "a few more as well aimed, and heigh for the Firebrand's gun-room!"

At the mention of the Firebrand I thought Obed started, but he soon recovered himself, and looking at me, with all the apparent composure in the world, he smiled as he said, "Not so fast, Lieutenant; you and I have not drank our last glass of swizzle yet, I guess. If I can but weather that chap a-head, I don't fear the schooner."

The corvette had by this time answered the signal from the Gleam, and had hauled his wind so, that I did not conceive it possible that the Wave could

scrape clear, without coming under his broadside.

"You won't try it, Obed, surely?"

"Answer me this, and I'll tell you," rejoined he.

"Does that corvette *now* carry long eighteens or thirty-two pound carronades?"

"She carries thirty-two pound carronades."

"Then you'll not sling your cot in her gun room this cruise."

All this time the little Wave was carrying to it gallantly, her jib-boom bending like whalebone, and her long slender topmasts whipping about like a couple of fishing-rods, as she thrashed at it, sending the spray flashing over her mast heads at every pitch; but notwithstanding her weatherly qualities, the heavy cross sea, as she drove into it, headed her off bodily, and she could not prevent the Gleam from creeping up on her weather quarter, where she peppered away from her long twenty-four pounder, throwing the shot over and over us.

To tack, therefore, would have been to run into the lion's mouth, and to bear up was equally hopeless, as the corvette, going free, would have chased her under water; the only chance remaining was to stand on, and trust to the breeze taking off, and try to weather the ship, now about three miles distant on our lee-bow, braced sharp up on the opposite tack, and quite aware of our game.

As the corvette and the Wave neared each other, he threw a shot at us from the boat gun on his top-gallant forecastle, as if to ascertain, beyond all doubt, the extent of our insanity, and whether we were serious in our attempt to weather him and escape.

Obed held right on his course like grim Death.

Another bullet whistled over our mast-heads, and, with the aid of the glass, I could see, by the twinkling of feet, and here and there a busy peering face through the ports, that the crew were at quarters fore and aft, while fourteen marines or so were all ready rigged on the poop, and the nettings were bristling through the whole length of the ship with fifty or sixty small-arm men.

All this I took care to communicate to Obediah. "I say, my good friend, I see little to laugh at in all this. If you do go to windward of him at all, which I greatly doubt, you will have to cross his fore-foot within pistol-shot at the farthest, and then you will have to rasp along his whole broadside of great and small, and they are right well prepared and ready for you, *that* I can tell you; the skipper of that ship has had some hedication, I guess, in the war on your coast, for he seems up to your tricks, and I don't doubt but that he will tip you the stem, if need be, with as little compunction as I would kill a cockroach, devil confound the whole breed! There,—I see his marines and small-arm men handling their firelocks, as thick as sparrows under the lee of a hedge in a snow-storm, and the people are training the bulldogs fore and aft. Why, this is downright, stark staring lunacy, Obed; we shall be smashed like an egg-shell, and all hands of us whipped off to Davy from your cursed fool-hardiness."

I had made several pauses in my address, expecting an answer, but Obed was mute as a stone. At length I took the glass from my eye, and turned round to look at him, startled by his silence.

I might have heard of such things, but I had never before seen the working of the spirit so forcibly and

fearfully demonstrated by the aspect of the outward man. With the exception of myself, he was the only man on deck, as before mentioned, and by this time he was squatted down on it, with his long legs and thighs thrust down into the cabin, through the open skylight. The little vessel happened to carry a weather helm, so that his long sinewy arms, with their large veins and leaders strained to cracking, covered but a small way below the elbow by his jacket, were stretched as far as they could clutch the tiller to windward, and his enormous head, supported on his very short trunk, that seemed to be countersunk into the deck, gave him a most extraordinary appearance. But this was not all; his complexion, usually sallow and sunburnt, was now ghastly and blue, like that of the corpse of a drowned man; the muscles of the neck, and the flesh of the cheeks and chin were rigid and fixed, and shrunk into one half of their usual compass; the lips were so compressed that they had entirely disappeared, and all that marked his mouth, was a black line; the nostrils were distended, and thin and transparent, while the forehead was shrivelled into the most minute, and immoveable wrinkles, as if done with a crimping instrument, while over his eyes, or rather his eye, for he kept one closed as if it had been hermetically sealed, he had lashed, with half a dozen turns of spun-yarn, a wooden socket, like the but-end of an opera-glass, fitted with some sort of magnifier, through which he peered out a-head most intensely, stooping down, and stretching his long bare neck to its utmost reach, that he might see under the foot of the foresail.

I had scarcely time to observe all this, when a round shot came through the head of the mainsail, grazing the

mast, and the very next instant a bushel of grape, from one of the bow guns, a thirty-two pound carro-nade, was crashed in on us a-midships. I flung down the glass, and dived through the companion into the cabin—I am not ashamed to own it; and any man who would undervalue my courage in consequence, can never, taking into consideration the peculiarities of my situation, have known the appalling sound, or infernal effect of a discharge of grape. Round shot in broadsides is a joke to it; musketry is a joke to it; but only conjure up in your imagination, a shower of iron bullets, of the size of well grown plums, to the number of, from sixty to one hundred and twenty, taking effect within a circle, not above ten feet in diameter, and that all this time there was neither honour nor glory in the case, for I was a miserable captive, and I fancy I may save myself the trouble of farther enlargement. I found that the crew had by this time started and taken up the planks of the cabin floor, and had stowed themselves well down into the run, so as to be as much out of harm's way as they could manage, but there was neither fear nor flinching amongst them; and although totally devoid of all gasconade, on the contrary, they had taken all the precautions men could do, in their situation, to keep out of harm's way, or at least to lessen the danger, there they sat, silent and cool, and determined. I shall never undervalue an American as an enemy again, thought I. I lay down on the side of the little vessel, now nearly level as she lay over, alongside of Paul Brandywine, in a position that commanded a view of Obed's face, through the small scuttle. Ten minutes might have elapsed—a tearing crash—and a rattle on the deck overhead, as if a shower of stones had been thrown from aloft on it.

"That's through the mainmast, I expect," quoth Paul.

I looked from him to the Captain; a black thick stream of blood was trickling down behind his ear. Paul had noticed it also.

"You are hurt by one of them splinters, I see; give me the helm now, Captain;" and, crushed down as the poor fellow appeared to be under some fearful and mysterious consciousness of impending danger, he nevertheless addressed himself to take his Captain's place.

"Hold your blasted tongue"—was the polite rejoinder.

"I say, Captain,"—shouted your humble servant, "you may as well eat peas with a pitchfork, as try to weather him. You are hooked, man, flounder as you will. Old Nick can't shake you clear—so I won't stand this any longer;" and making a spring, I jammed myself through the skylight, until I sat on the deck, looking aft, and confronting him, and there we were stuck up like the two kings of Brentford, or a couple of *smiling cherries* on one stalk. I have often laughed over the figure we must have cut, but at the time there was that going on, that would have made Comus himself look grave. I had at length fairly aroused the sleeping devil within him.—"Look out *there*, Lieutenant—look out there,"—and he pointed with his sinister claw down to leeward. I did so—whew!—what a sight for poor Master Thomas Cringle! "You are booked for an outside place, Master Tommy"—thought I to myself—for *there* was the corvette in very truth—she had just tacked, and was close aboard of us, on our lee

quarter, within musket-shot at the farthest, bowling along upon a wind, with the green, hissing, multitudinous sea surging along her sides, and washing up in foam, like snow flakes through the mid-ship ports, far aft on the quarter deck, to the glorification of Jack, who never minds a wet jacket, so long as he witnesses the discomfiture of his ally, Peter Pipeclay. The press of canvass she was carrying laid her over, until her copper sheathing, clear as glass, and glancing like gold, was seen high above the water, throughout her whole length, above which rose her glossy jet black bends, [surmounted by a milk-white streak, broken at regular intervals into eleven goodly ports, from which the British cannon, ugly customers at the best, were grinning, tompion out, open-mouthed at us; and above all, the clean, well-stowed white hammocks filled the nettings, from taffarel to cathead—oh! that I had been in one of them, snug on the berth deck! Aloft, a cloud of white sail swelled to the breeze, till the cloth seemed inclined to say good-by to the bolt ropes, bending the masts like willow-wands (as if the devil, determined to beat Paganini himself, was preparing fiddlesticks to play a spring with, on the cracking and straining weather shrouds and back-stays,) and tearing her sharp wedge-like bows out of the bowels of the long swell, until the cutwater, and ten yards of the keel next to it, were hove clean out of the sea, into which she would descend again with a roaring plunge, burying every thing up to the hausholes, and driving the brine into mist, over the fore-top, like vapour from a waterfall, through which, as she rose again, the bright red copper on her bows flashed back the sun beams in momentary rainbows. We were so near, that I could with the naked eye

distinctly see the faces of the men. There were at least 150 determined fellows at quarters, and clustered, with muskets in their hands, wherever they could be posted to most advantage.

There they were in groups about the ports, (I could even see the captains of the guns, examining the locks,) in their clean white frocks and trousers, the officers of the ship, and the marines, clearly distinguishable by their blue or red jackets. *I could discern the very sparkle of the epaulets.*

High overhead the red cross, that for a thousand years "has braved the battle and the breeze," blew out strong from the Peake, like a sheet of flickering white flame, or a thing instinct with life, struggling to tear away the ensign halyards, and to escape high into the clouds: while from the main-royal-mast-head, the long white pennant streamed upwards into the azure heavens, like a ray of silver light. Oh! it was a sight "most beautiful to see," as the old song hath it,—but I confess I would have preferred that pleasure from t'other side of the hedge.

There was no hailing nor trumpeting, although, as we crossed on opposite tacks when we first weathered her, just before she hove in stays, I had heard a shrill voice sing out, "Take good aim, men. Fire;" but *now* each cannon in thunder shot forth its glance of flame, without a word being uttered, as she kept away to bring them to bear in succession, while the long feathery cloud of whirling white smoke, that shrouded her sides from stem to stern, was sparkling brilliantly throughout with crackling musketry, for all the world like fire-flies in a bank of night fog from the hills, until the breeze blew it back again through the rigging, and once more unveiled the lovely craft in all her pride

and glory. "You see all that?" said Obed.—"To be sure I do, and I feel something too;" for a sharp rasping jar was repeated in rapid succession three or four times, as so many shot struck our hull, and made the splinters glance about merrily; and the musket-balls were mottling our top sides and spars, plumping into the timber, *whit, whit!* as thick as ever you saw schoolboys plastering a church door with claypellets. There was a heavy groan, and a stir amongst the seamen in the run. "And, pray do you see and hear all that yourself, Master Obed? The iron has clenched some of your chaps down there.—Stay a bit, you shall have a better dose presently, you obstinate old——"

He waved his hand, and interrupted me with great energy—"I *dare* not give in, I cannot give in; all I have in the world swims in the little hooker, and strike I will not so long as two planks stick together."

"Then," quoth I, "you are simply a d—d, cold-blooded, calculating scoundrel—brave I will never call you." I saw he was now stung to the quick.

"Lieutenant, smuggler as I am, don't goad me to what worse I may have been; there are some deeds done in my time, which at a moment like this I don't much like to think upon. I am a desperate man, Master Cringle; don't, for your own sake, as well as mine, try me too far."

"Well but,"——persisted I. He would hear nothing.

"Enough said, sir, enough said; there was not an honest trader nor a happier man in all the Union, until your infernal pillaging and burning squadron in the Chesapeake captured and ruined me; but I paid

it off on the prize-master, although we were driven on the rocks after all. I paid it off, and, as I stand here, I have never thriven since, enemy although he was. I see the poor fellow's face, yet, as I"—He checked himself suddenly, as if aware that he might say more than could be conveniently retracted. "But I *dare not* be taken; let that satisfy you, Master Clingle, so go below—below with you, sir"—I saw he had succeeded in lashing himself into a fury—"or, by Him who hears me, I shall be tempted to do another deed, the remembrance of which will haunt me till my dying day."

All this passed in no time, as we say, much quicker than one can read it; and I now saw that the corvette had braced up, sharp to the wind again, on the same tack that we were on; so I slipped down like an eel, and once more stretched myself beside Paul, on the leeside of the cabin. We soon found that she was after us in earnest, by the renewal of the cannonade, and the breezing up of the small arms again. Two round shot now tore right through the deck, just beneath the larboard coamings of the main hatchway; the little vessel's deck, as she lay over, being altogether exposed to the enemy's fire, they made her whole frame tremble again, smashing every thing in their way to shivers, and going right out through her bottom on the opposite side, within a dozen streaks of her keel, while the rattling of the clustered grapeshot every now and then made us start, the musketry all the while peppering away like a hail shower. Still the skipper, who I expected every moment to see puffed away from the tiller like smoke, held upon deck as if he had been bullet-proof, and seemed to escape the hellish tornado of missiles of all sorts and sizes by

a miracle. "He is in league with the old one, Paul," said I; "however, you must be nabbed, for you see the ship is forereaching on you, and you can't go on t'other tack, surely, with these pretty eylet holes between wind and water on the weather side there? Your captain is mad—why *will you*, then, and all these poor fellows, go down because *he dare* not surrender, for some good deed of his own, eh?"

The roar of the cannon and noise of the musketry made it necessary for me to raise my voice here, which the small scuttle like Dionysius's ear, conveyed unexpectedly to my friend, the captain, on deck.

"Hand me up my pistols, Paul."

It had struck me before, and I was now certain, that from the time he had become so intensely excited as he was now, that he spoke with a pure English accent, without the smallest dash of Yankeeism. "So, so: I see—no wonder you won't strike, you renegade," cried I.

"You have tampered with my crew, sir, and abused me," he announced, in a stern, slow tone, much more alarming than his former fierceness, "so take that, to quiet you;" and deuce take me if he did not, the moment he received the pistols from his mate, fire slap at me, the ball piercing the large muscle of my neck on the right side, missing the artery by the merest accident. Thinking I was done for, I covered my face with my hands and commended myself to God, with all the resignation that could be expected from a poor young fellow in my grievous circumstances, expecting to be cut off in the *prima vera* of his days, and to part for ever from——. Poo, that there line is not my forte. However, finding the hæmorrhage by no means great, and that the wound

was in fact slight, I took the captain's rather strong hint to be still, and lay quiet, until a 32lb. shot struck us bang on the quarter. The subdued force with which it came, showed that we were widening our distance, for it did not drive through and through with a crash, but lodged in a timber; nevertheless it started one of the planks across which Paul and I lay, and pitched us both with extreme violence bodily into the run amongst the men, three of them lying amongst the ballast, which was covered with blood, two badly wounded, and one dead. I came off with some slight bruises; however, not so the poor mate. He had been nearest the end or *but* that was started, which, thereby struck him so forcibly, that it fractured his spine, and dashed him amongst his shipmates, shrieking piercingly in his great agony, and clutching whatever he could grasp with his hands, and tearing whatever he could reach with his teeth, while his limbs below his waist were dead and paralysed.—“Oh, water! water,” he cried, “water, for the love of mercy, water!” The crew did all they could; but his torments increased—the blood began to flow from his mouth—his hands became clay-cold and pulseless—his features sharp, blue, and death-like—his respiration difficult—the choking death-rattle succeeded, and in ten minutes he was dead.

This was the last shot that told—every report became more and more faint, and the musketry soon ceased altogether.

The breeze had taken off, and the Wave, resuming her superiority in light winds, *had escaped*.

CHAPTER XII.

CUBA FISHERMEN.

"El pescador de Puerto Escondido
Pesca mas que Pescado
Quando la Luna redonda
Reflexado en lar mar profunda.
Pero cuidado,
El pobre sera el nino perdido
Si esta por *Anglisman* cojido
Ay de mi."

It was now five in the afternoon, and the breeze continued to fall, and the sea to go down, until sunset, by which time we had run the corvette hull down, and the schooner nearly out of sight. Right a-head of us rose the high land of Cuba, to the westward of Cape Maisé, clear and well-defined against the northern sky; and as we neither hauled our wind to weather the east end of the island, nor edged away for St. Jago, it was evident, beyond all doubt, that we were running right in for some one of the piratical haunts on the Cuba coast.

The crew now set to work, and removed the remains of their late messmate, and the two wounded men, from where they lay upon the ballast in the Run, to their own berth forward in the bows of the

little vessel; they then replaced the planks which they had started, and arranged the dead body of the Mate along the cabin floor, close to where I lay, faint and bleeding, and more heavily bruised than I had at first thought.

The Captain was still at the helm; he had never spoken a word either to me or any of the crew, since he had taken the trifling liberty of shooting me through the neck, and no thanks to him that the wound was not mortal; but he now resumed his American accent, and began to drawl out the necessary orders for repairing damages.

When I went on deck shortly afterwards, I was surprised beyond measure to perceive the injury the little vessel had sustained, and the uncommon speed, handiness, and skill, with which it had been repaired. However lazily the command might appear to have been given, the execution of it was quick as lightning. The crew, now reduced to ten working hands, had, with an almost miraculous promptitude, knotted and spliced the rigging, mended and shifted sails, fished the sprung and wounded spars, and plugged and nailed lead over the shot-holes, and all within half an hour. I don't like Americans; I never did, and never shall like them; I have seldom or never met with an American gentleman; I have no wish to eat with them, drink with them, deal with, or consort with them in any way; but let me tell the whole truth, *nor fight* with them, were it not for the laurels to be acquired, by overcoming an enemy so brave, determined, and alert, and every way so worthy of one's steel, as they have always proved. One used to fight with a Frenchman, as a matter of course, and for the fun of the thing as it were, never dreaming of the pos-

sibility of Johnny Crapeau beating us, where there was any thing approaching to an equality of force; but, say as much as we please about larger ships, and more men, and a variety of excuses which proud John Bull, with some truth, very often I will admit, has pertinaciously thrust forward to palliate his losses during the short war, a regard for truth and fair dealing, which I hope are no scarce qualities amongst British seamen, compels me to admit, that although I would of course peril my life and credit more readily with an English crew, yet I believe a feather would turn the scale between the two countries, so far as courage and seamanship go; and let it not be forgotten, although we have now regained our superiority in this respect, yet, in gunnery, and small-arm practice, we were as thoroughly weathered on by the Americans during the war, as we overtopped them in the bull-dog courage, with which our boarders handled those genuine English weapons, the cutlass and the pike.

After the Captain had given his orders, and seen the men fairly at work, he came down to the cabin, still ghastly and pale, but with none of that ferocity stamped on his grim features, from the outpouring of which I had suffered so severely. He never once looked my way, no more than if I had been a bundle of old junk; but folding his hands on his knee, he sat down on a small locker, against which the feet of the dead Mate rested, and gazed earnestly on his face, which was immediately under the open skylight, through which, by this time, the clear cold rays of the moon streamed full on it, the short twilight having already fled, chained as it is in these climates to the chariot-wheels of the burning sun. My eye naturally

followed his, but I speedily withdrew it. I had often bent over comrades who had been killed by gun-shot wounds, and always remarked what is well known, that the features wore a benign expression, bland, and gentle, and contented as the face of a sleeping infant, while their limbs were composed decently, often gracefully, like one resting after great fatigue, as if nature, like an affectionate nurse, had arranged the death-bed of her departing child with more than usual care, preparatory to his last long sleep. Whereas those who had died from the thrust of a pike or the blow of a cutlass, however mild the living expression of their countenance might have been, were always fearfully contorted both in body and face.

In the present instance, the eyes were wide open, white, prominent, and glazed like those of a dead fish; the hair, which was remarkably fine, and had been worn in long ringlets, amongst which a large gold ear-ring glittered, the poor fellow having been a nautical dandy of the first water, was drenched and clotted into heavy masses with the death-sweat, and had fallen back on the deck from his forehead, which was well formed, high, broad and massive. His nose was transparent, thin, and sharp, the tense skin on the bridge of it glancing in the silver light, as if it had been glass. His mouth was puckered on one side into angular wrinkles, like a curtain drawn up awry, while a clotted stream of black gore crept from it sluggishly down his right cheek, and coagulated in a heap on the deck. His lower jaw had fallen, and there he lay agape with his mouth full of blood.

His legs, indeed his whole body below his loins, where the fracture of the spine had taken place, rested precisely as they had been arranged after he died;

but the excessive swelling and puffing out of his broad chest, contrasted shockingly with the shrinking of the body at the pit of the stomach, by which the arch of the ribs was left as well defined as if the skin had been drawn over a skeleton, and the distortion of the muscles of the cheeks and throat evinced the fearful strength of the convulsions which had preceded his dissolution. It was evident, indeed, that throughout his whole person above the waist, the nervous system had been utterly shattered: the arms, especially, appeared to have been awfully distorted; for when crossed on his breast, they had to be forcibly fastened down at the wrists by a band of spun-yarn to the buttons of his jacket. His right hand was shut, with the exception of the fore-finger, which was extended, pointing upwards; but the whole arm, from the shoulder down, had the horrible appearance of struggling to get free from the cord which confined it.

Obed, by the time I had noticed all this, had knelt beside the shoulder of the corpse, and I could see by the moonlight that flickered across his face as the vessel rolled in the declining breeze, that he had pushed off his eye the uncouth spyglass which he had fastened over it during the chase, so that it now stood out from the middle of his forehead, like a stunted horn; but, in truth, "it was not exalted," for he appeared crushed down to the very earth by the sadness of the scene before him, and I noticed the frequent sparkle of a heavy tear as it fell from his iron visage on the face of the dead man. At length he untied the string that fastened the eye-glass round his head, and taking a coarse towel from a locker, he spunged poor Paul's face and neck with rum, and then fastened up his lower jaw with the lanyard. Having

performed this melancholy office, the poor fellow's feelings could no longer be restrained by my presence.

"I have not now," said he, "one friend in the wide world. When I had neither home, nor food, nor clothing, he sheltered me, and fed me, and clothed me, when a single word would have gained him five hundred dollars, and run me up to the fore-yard-arm in a wreath of white smoke; but he was true as steel; and, oh, that he was now doing for me what I have done for him! who would have moaned over me, me, who am now without wife or child, and have disgraced all my kin! a-lack-a-day! a-lack-a-day!"—And he sobbed and wept aloud, as if his very heart would have burst in twain.

"But I will soon follow you, Paul, I have had my warning already; I know it, and I believe it." At this instant the dead hand of the mate burst the ligature that kept it down across his body, and slowly rose up and remained in a beckoning attitude.

I was seized with a cold shivering from head to foot, and would have shrieked aloud, had it not been for very shame, but Obed was unmoved. "I know it, Paul. I know it. I am ready, and I shall not be long behind you." He fastened the arm down once more, and having called a couple of hands to assist him, they lashed up the remains of their shipmate in his hammock, with a piece of iron ballast at his feet, and then, without more ado, handed the body up through the skylight; and I heard the heavy splash as they cast it into the sea. When this was done, the captain returned to the cabin, bringing a light with him, filled and drank off a glass of strong grog. Yet he did not even now deign to notice me, which was

by no means soothing; and I found, that, since he wouldn't speak, I must, at all hazards.

"I say, Obed, do you ever read your Bible?" He looked steadily at me with his lacklustre eyes. "Because, if you do, you may perhaps have fallen in with some such passages as the following:—'Behold, I am in your hand; but know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves.'"

"It is true, Mr. Cringle, I feel the truth of it here," and he laid his large bony hand on his heart. "Yet I do not ask you to forgive me; I don't expect that you can or will: but unless the devil gets possession of me again—which, so sure as ever there was a demoniac in this world, he had this afternoon when you so tempted me—I hope soon to place you in safety, either in a friendly port, or on board of a British vessel; and then what becomes of me is of little consequence now, since the only living soul who cared a dollar for me is at rest amongst the coral branches at the bottom of the deep green sea."

"Why, man," rejoined I, "leave off this stuff; something has turned your brain, surely; people must die in their beds, you know, if they be not shot, or put out of the way somehow or other; and as for my small affair, why I forgive you, man—from my heart I forgive you; were it only for the oddity of your scantling, mental and corporeal, I would do so; and you see I am not much hurt,—so lend me a hand, like a good fellow, to wash the wound with a little spirits—it will stop the bleeding, and the stiffness will soon go off—so"—

"Lieutenant Cringle, I need not tell what I know you have found out, that I am *not* the vulgar Yankee

smuggler, fit only to be made a butt of by you and your friends, that you, no doubt, at first took me for; but who or what I am, or what I may have been, you shall never know—but I will tell you this much”—

“Devil confound the fellow!—why this is too much upon the brogue, Obed. Will you help me to dress my wound, man, and leave off your cursed sentimental speeches, which you must have gleaned from some old novel or another? I’ll hear it all by and by.”

At this period I was a reckless young chap, with strong nerves, and my own share of that animal courage, which generally oozes out at one’s finger ends when one gets married and turned of thirty; nevertheless, I did watch with some anxiety the effect which my unceremonious interruption was to have upon him. I was agreeably surprised to find that he took it all in good part, and set himself, with great alacrity and kindness, even, to put me to rights, and so successfully, that when I was washed and cleansed, and fairly coopered up, I found myself quite able to take my place at the table; and having no fear of the College of Surgeons before my eyes, I helped myself to a little of the needful, and in the plenitude of my heart, I asked Obed’s pardon for my ill-bred interruption.

“It was not quite the thing to cut you short in the middle of your Newgate Calendar, Obed—beg pardon, your story, I mean; no offence now, none in the world—eh? But where the deuce, man, got you this fine linen of Egypt?” looking at the sleeves of the shirt Obed had obliged me with, as I sat without my coat. “I had not dreamt you had any thing so luxurious in your kit.”

I saw his brow begin to lower again, so the devil

prompted me to advert, by way of changing the subject, to a file of newspapers, which, as it turned out, might have proved to be by far the most dangerous topic I could have hit upon. He had laid them aside, having taken them out of the locker when he was rummaging for the linen. "What have we here?—Kingston Chronicle, Montego Bay Gazette, Falmouth Advertiser. A great newsmonger you must be. What arrivals?—let me see;—you know I am a week from head-quarters. Let me see."

At first he made a motion as if he would have snatched them out of my hands, but speedily appeared to give up the idea, merely murmuring—"What can it signify *now*?"

I continued to read—"Chanticleer from a cruise—Tonnant from Barbadoes—Pique from Port-au-Prince. Oh, the next interests me—the Firebrand is daily expected from Havanna; she is come through the gulf, round Cape Antonio, and beat up the haunts of the pirates all along the Cuba shore." I was certain *now* that, at the mention of this corvette, mine host winced in earnest. This made me anxious to probe him farther. "Why, what means this pencil mark—'Firebrand's number off the Chesapeake was 1022?' How the deuce, my fine fellow, do *you* know that?"

He shook his head, but said nothing, and I went on reading the pencil memoranda—"But this is most probably changed; she now carries a red cross in the head of her foresail, and has very short lower masts, like the Hornet." Still he made me no answer. I proceeded—"Stop, let me see what merchant ships are about sailing. 'Loading for Liverpool, the John Gladstone, Peter Ponderous, master;'" and after it,

again in pencil—" 'Only sugar; goes through the gulf.—*Only* sugar," said I, still fishing; "too bulky, I suppose.—'Ariel Jenkins, Whitehaven;'" remark—"sugar, coffee, and logwood. Nuestra Senora de los Dolores, to sail for Chagres on 7th proximo;" remark—" 'rich cargo of bale goods, but no chance of overtaking her.'—El Rayo to sail for St. Jago de Cuba on the 10th proximo;" remark—" 'sails fast; armed with a long gun, and musketry; thirty hands; about ten Spanish passengers; valuable cargo of dry goods; main-mast rakes well aft; new cloth in the foresail about half-way up; will be off the Moro about the 13th.—And what is this written in ink under the above?—'The San Pedro from Chagres, and Marianita from Santa Martha, although rich, have both got convoy.' Ah, too strong for your friends, Obed—I see, I see.—'Francis Baring, Loan French, master'—an odd name, rather, for a skipper;" remark—" 'forty seroons of cochineal and some specie; is to sail from Morant Bay on the 5th proximo, to go through the windward passage; may be expected off Cape St. Nicolas on the 12th or thereby.'" I laid down the paper, and looked him full in the face. "Nicolas is an ominous name. I fear the good ship Francis Baring will find it so. Some of the worthy saint's clerks to be fallen in with off the Mole, eh? Don't you think as I do, Obed?" Still silent. "Why, you seem to take great delight in noting the intended departures and expected arrivals, my friend—merely to satisfy your curiosity, of course; but, to come to close quarters with you, captain, I know pretty well the object of your visiting Jamaica now and then,—you are indeed no vulgar *smuggler*."

"It is well for you, and good for myself, Mr.

Cringle, that something weighs heavy at my heart at this moment, and that there is that about you which, notwithstanding your ill-timed jesting, commands my respect, and engages my good-will—had it not been so, you would have been alongside of poor Paul at this moment.” He leant his arms upon the table, and gazed intensely on my face as he continued in a solemn tremulous tone—“Do you believe in auguries, Mr. Cringle? Do you believe that ‘coming events cast their shadows before?’”—Oh, that little Wiggy Campbell had been beside me to have seen the figure and face of the man who now quoted him!—“Yes, I do, it is part of the creed of every sailor to do so; I do believe that people have had forewarnings of peril to themselves or their friends.”

“Then what do you think of the mate beckoning me with his dead hand to follow him?”

“Why you are raving, Obed; you saw that he had been much convulsed, and that the limb, from the contraction of the sinews, was forcibly kept down in the position it broke loose from—the spun-yarn gave way, and of course it started up—nothing wonderful in all this, although it did at the time somehow startle me, I confess.”

“It may be so, it may be so. I don’t know,” rejoined he, “but taken along with what I saw before”—

Here his voice sank into so hollow and sepulchral a tone as to be almost unintelligible. “But there is no use in arguing on the subject. Answer me this, Lieutenant Cringle, and truly, so help you God, at your utmost need, *did the mate leave the cabin at any moment after I was wounded by the splinter?*” And he seized one of my hands convulsively with his iron

paw, while he pointed up though the open scuttle towards heaven with the other, which trembled like a reed. The moon shone strong on the upper part of his countenance, while the yellow smoky glare of the candle over which he bent, blending harshly and unharmoniously with the pale silver light, fell full on his uncouth figure, and on his long scraggy bare neck and chin and cheeks; giving altogether a most unearthly expression to his savage features; from the conflicting tints and changing shadows cast by the flickering moonbeams streaming fitfully through the sky-light, as the vessel rolled to and fro' and by the large torchlike candle as it wavered in the night wind. The Prince of the Powers of the Air might have sat for his picture by proxy. It was just such a face as one has dreamed of after a hot supper and cold ale, when the whisky had been forgotten; horrible, changing, vague, glimmering, and undefined; and as if something were still wanting to complete the utter frightfulness of his aspect, the splinter wound in his head burst out afresh from his violent agitation, and streamed down in heavy drops from his forehead, falling warm on my hand. I was much shaken at being adjured in this tremendous way, *with the hot blood glewing our hands together*, but I returned his grasp as steadily as I could, while I replied, with all the composure he had left me, and that would not have quite filled a Winchester bushel,—

“*He never left my side from the time he offered to take your place after you had been wounded.*” He fell back against the locker as if he had been shot through the heart. His grasp relaxed, he drew his breath very hard, and I thought he had fainted.

“Then it was *not* him that stood by me; I thought

it *might* have been him, but I was a fool, it was impossible."

He made a desperate effort to recover his composure, and succeeded.—"And, pray, Master Obediah," quoth I, "*what did you see?*" He answered me sharply—"Never mind, never mind—here, Potomac, lend us a hand to sling a cot for this gentleman; there now, see the lanyard is sound, and the lacing all tight and snug—now put that mattress into it, and there is linen in the chest." In a trice my couch was rigged, all comfortable, snow-white linen, nice pillow, soft mattress, &c., and Obed, filling me another tumbler, helped himself also; he then drank to my health, wished me a sound sleep, promised to call me at day-light, and as he left the cabin he said, "Mr. Cringle, had it been my object to have injured you, I would not have waited until now. You are quite safe so far as depends on me, so take your rest—good night, once more." I tumbled into bed, and never once opened my eyes until Obed called me at day-light, that is, at five in the morning, according to his promise.

By this time we were well in with the Cuba shore; the land might be two miles from us, as we could see the white surf. Out at sea, although all around was clear as crystal, there was nothing to be seen of the Gleam or Firebrand, but there were ten or twelve fishing canoes, each manned with from four to six hands, close aboard of us;—we seemed to have got becalmed in the middle of a small fleet of them. The nearest to us hailed in Spanish, in a very friendly way,—"Como estamos Captain, que hay de nuevo; hay algo de bueno, para los pobres Pescadores?" and the fellow who had spoken laughed loudly. The Captain

desired him to come on board, and then drew him aside, conversing earnestly with him. The Spanish fisherman was a very powerful man; he was equipped in a blue cotton shirt, Osnaburg trowsers, sandals of untanned bullock's hide, a straw hat, and wore the eternal greasy red sash and long knife. He was a bold, daring-looking fellow, and frequently looked frowningly on me, and shook his head impatiently; while the Captain, as it seemed, was explaining to him who I was. Just in this nick of time my friend Potomac handed up my uniform coat. I had previously been performing my ablutions on deck in my shirt and trowsers, which I put on, swab and all, thinking no harm. But there must have been mighty great offence nevertheless, for the fisherman, in a twinkling, casting a fierce look at me, jumped overboard like a feather, clearing the rail like a flying fish, and swam to his canoe, that had shoved off a few paces.

When he got on board he stood up and shook his clenched fist at Obed, shouting, "Picaro, Traidor, Ingleses hay abordo, quieres enganarnos!" He then held up the blade of his paddle, a signal which all the canoes answered in a moment in the same manner, and then pulled towards the land, from whence a felucca, invisible until that moment, now swept out, as if she had floated up to the surface by magic, for I could see neither creek, nor indentation on the shore, nor the smallest symptom of any entrance to a port or cove. For a few minutes the canoes clustered round this necromantic craft, and I could notice that two or three hands from each of them jumped on board; they then paddled off in a string, and vanished one by one amongst the mangrove bushes as suddenly as the

felucca had appeared. All this puzzled me exceedingly—I looked at Obed—he was evidently sorely perplexed. “I had thought to have put you on board a British vessel before this, or, failing that, to have run down, and landed you at St. Jago, Mr. Cringle, as I promised, but you see I am prevented by these *honest* men there; get below, and, as you value your life, and, I may say, mine, keep your temper, and be civil.” I did as he suggested, but peeped out of the cabin sky-light to see what was going on, notwithstanding. The felucca, I could see, was armed with a heavy carronade on a pivot, and as full of men as she could hold, fierce, half-naked, savage-looking fellows, as one could desire to see—she swept rapidly up to us, and closing on our larboard quarter, threw about five-and-twenty of her genteel young people on board, who immediately secured the crew, and seized Obed. However, they, that is, the common sailors, seemed to have no great stomach for the job, and, had it not been for the fellow I had frightened overboard, I don’t think one of them would have touched him. Obed bore all this with great equanimity.

“Why, Francisco,” he said, to this personage, in good Spanish, “why, what madness is this? your suspicions are groundless; it is as I tell you, he is my prisoner, and whatever he may have been to me, he can be no spy on you.”

“Cuchillo entonces,” was the savage reply.

“No, no,” persisted Obediah, “get cool, man, get cool, I am pledged that no harm shall come to him; and farther, I have promised to put him ashore at St. Jago, and I *will* be as good as my word.”

"You can't, if you would," rejoined Francisco; "the Snake is at anchor under the Moro."

"Then he must go with us."

"We shall see as to that," said the other; then raising his voice, he shouted to his ragamuffins,—
"Comrades, we are betrayed; there is an English officer on board, who can be nothing but a spy; follow me!"

And he dashed down the companion ladder, knife in hand, while I sprung through the small scuttle, like a rat out of one hole when a ferret is put in at the other, and crept as close to Obed as I could; Francisco, when he missed me, came on deck again. The captain had now seized a cutlass in one hand, and held a cocked pistol in the other. It appeared he had greater control, the nature of which I now began to comprehend, over the felucca's people, than Francisco bargained for, as the moment the latter went below, they released him, and went forward in a body. My persecutor again advanced close up to me, and seized me by the collar with one hand, and tried to drag me forward, brandishing his naked knife aloft in the other.

Obed promptly caught his sword-arm—"Francisco," he exclaimed, still in Spanish, "fool, madman, let go your hold! let go, or, by the heaven above us, and the hell we are both hastening to, I will strike you dead."

The man paused, and looked round to his own people, and seeing one or two encouraging glances and gestures amongst them, he again attempted to drag me away from my hold on the tafferel. Something flashed in the sun, and the man fell! His left arm, the hand of which still clutched my throat, while

mine grasped its wrist, had been shred from his body by Obed's cutlass, like a twig, and, oh! my blood curdles to my heart, even now, when I think of it, the dead fingers kept the grasp sufficiently long to allow the arm to fall heavily against my side, where it hung for some seconds, until the muscles relaxed and it dropped on the deck. The instant that Obed struck the blow, he caught hold of my hand, threw away his cutlass, and advanced towards the group of the felucca's men, pistol in hand.

"Am I not your captain, ye cowards—have I ever deceived you yet—have I ever flinched from heading you where the danger was greatest—have you not all that I am worth in your hands, and will you murder me now?"

"Viva, el noble Capitan, viva!"

And the tide turned as rapidly in our favour as it had lately ebbed against us.

"As for that scoundrel, he has got no more than he deserves," said he, turning to where Francisco lay, bleeding like a carcass in the shambles; "but tie up his arm, some of ye, I would be sorry he bled to death."

It was unavailing, the large arteries had emptied his whole life blood—he had already gone to his account. This most miserable transaction, with all its concomitant horrors, to my astonishment, did not seem to make much impression on Obed, who, now, turning to me, said, with perfect composure,—

"You have there another melancholy voucher for my sincerity," pointing to the body;—"but time presses, and you must now submit to be blindfolded, and that without farther explanation at present."

I did so with the best grace I could, and was led

below, where two beauties, with loaded pistols and a drawn knife each, obliged me with their society, one seated on each side of me on the small locker, like two deputy butchers, ready to operate on an unfortunate veal. It had now fallen dead calm, and, from what I heard, I conjectured that the felucca was sweeping in towards the land with us in tow, for the sound of the serf grew louder and louder. By and by we seemed to slide beyond the long smooth swell into broken water, for the little vessel pitched sharp and suddenly, and again all was still, and we seemed to have sailed into some land-locked cove. From the loud echo of the voices on deck, I judged that we were in a narrow canal, the banks of which were reflecting the sound; presently this ceased, and although we skimmed along as motionless as before, I no longer heard the splash of the felucca's sweeps; the roar of the sea gradually sank in the distance, until it sounded like thunder, and I thought we touched the ground now and then, although slightly. All at once, the Spanish part of the crew, for we still had a number of the felucca's people with us, sang out "Pelanka," and we began to pole along a narrow marshy lagoon, coming so near the shore occasionally, that our sides were brushed by the branches of the mangrove bushes. Again the channel seemed to widen, and I could hear the felucca once more ply her sweeps. In about ten minutes after this the anchor was let go, and for a quarter of an hour, nothing was heard on deck but the bustle of the people furling sails, coiling down the ropes, and getting every thing in order, as is usual in coming into port. It was evident that several boats had boarded us soon after we anchored, as I could make out part of the

greetings between the strangers and Obed, in which my own name recurred more than once. In a little while all was still again, and Obed called down the companion to my guards, that I might come on deck, a boon I was not long in availing myself of. We were anchored nearly in the centre of a shallow swampy lagoon, about a mile across, as nearly as I could judge;—two very large schooners, heavily armed, were moored a-head of us, one on each bow, and another rather smaller lay close under our stern; they all had sails bent, and every thing, apparently, in high order, and were full of men. The shore, to the distance of a bow-shot from the water all around us, was low, marshy, and covered with an impervious jungle of thick strong reeds and wild canes, with here and there a thicket of mangroves; a little farther off, the land swelled into lofty hills, covered, to the very summit, with heavy timber, but every thing had a moist, green, steamy appearance, as if it had been the region of perpetual rain.

“Lots of yellow fever here,” thought I, as the heavy, rank smell of decayed vegetable matter came off, on the faint sickly breeze, and the sluggish fog banks crept along the dull clay-coloured motionless surface of the tepid water. The sea-view was quite shut out—I looked all round and could discern no vestige of the entrance. Right a-head, there was about a furlong of land cleared at the only spot which one could call a beach, that is, a hard shore of sand and pebbles. Had you tried to get ashore at any other point, your fate would have been that of the Master of Ravenswood; as fatal, that is, without the gentility; for you would have been suffocated in black mud, in place of clean sea-sand. There was a long shed

in the centre of this cleared spot, covered in with boards, and thatched with palm-leaves; it was open below, a sort of capstan-house, where a vast quantity of sails, anchors, cordage, and most kinds of sea-stores were stowed, carefully covered over with tarpawling. Overhead, there was a flooring laid along the couples of the roof, the whole length of the shed, forming a loft of nearly sixty feet long, divided by bulkheads into a variety of apartments, lit by small rude windows in the thatch, where the crews of the vessels, I concluded, were occasionally lodged during the time they might be under repair. The boat was manned, and Obed took me ashore with him. We landed near the shed I have described, beneath which we encountered about forty of the most uncouth and ferocious-looking rascals that my eyes had ever been blessed withal; they were of every shade, from the woolly Negro and long-haired Indian, to the sallow American and fair Biscayan; and as they intermitted their various occupations of mending sails, fitting and stretching rigging, splicing ropes, making spun-yarn, coopering gun-carriages, grinding pikes and cutlasses, and filling cartridges, to look at me, they grinned and nodded to each other, and made sundry signs and gestures, which made me regret many a past peccadillo that in more prosperous times I little thought on, and I internally prayed that I might be prepared to die as became a man, for my fate appeared to be sealed. The only ray of hope that shot into my mind, through all this gloom, came from the respect the thieves, one and all, paid the captain; and, as I had reaped the benefit of assuming an outward recklessness and daring, which I really did not at heart possess, I screwed myself up to maintain the same port still, and swaggered along, jabbering, in my

broken Spanish, right and left, and jesting even with the most infamous-looking scoundrels of the whole lot, while, I can affirm, my heart was palpitating like a girl's when she is asked to be married. Obed led the way up a ladder into the loft, where we found several messes at dinner, and passing through several rooms, in which a number of hammocks were slung, we at length arrived at the eastern end, which was boarded off into a room eighteen or twenty feet square, lighted by a small port-hole in the end, about ten feet from the ground. I could see several huts from this window, built just on the edge of the high wood, where some of the country people seemed to be moving about, and round which a large flock of pigs, and twenty to thirty bullocks were grazing. All beyond, as far as the eye could reach, was one continuous forest, without any vestige of a living thing; not even a thin wreath of blue smoke evinced the presence of a fellow creature; I seemed to be hopelessly cut off from all succour, and my heart again died within me.

"I am sorry to say you must consider yourself a prisoner here for a few days," said Obed.

I could only groan.

"But the moment the coast is clear, I will be as good as my word, and land you at St Jago."

I groaned again. The man was moved.

"I would I could do so sooner," he continued; "but you see by how precarious a tenure I hold my control over these people; therefore I must be cautious for your sake as well as my own, or they would make little of murdering both of us, especially as the fellow who would have cut your throat this morning, has many friends amongst them; above all, I dare not

leave them for any purpose for some days. I must recover my seat, in which, by the necessary severity you witnessed, I have been somewhat shaken. So good-by; there is cold meat in that locker, and some claret to wash it down with. Don't, I again warn you, venture out during the afternoon or night. I will be with you betimes in the morning. So good-by so long. Your cot, you see, is ready slung."

He turned to depart, when, as if recollecting himself, he stooped down, and taking hold of a ring, he lifted up a trap-door, from which there was a ladder leading down to the capstan-house.

"I had forgotten this entrance; it will be more convenient for me in my visits."

In my heart I believe he intended this as a hint, that I should escape through the hole at some quiet opportunity; and he was descending the ladder, when he stopped and looked round, greatly mortified, as it struck me.

"I forgot to mention that a sentry has been placed, I don't know by whose orders, at the foot of the ladder, to whom I must give orders to fire at you, if you venture to descend. You see how the land lies; I can't help it.

This was spoken in a low tone, then aloud—"There are books on that shelf behind the canvass screen; if you can settle to them, they may amuse you."

He left me, and I sat down disconsolate enough. I found some Spanish books, and a volume of Lord Byron's poetry, containing the first canto of *Childe Harold*, two Numbers of *Blackwood*, with several other English books and magazines, *the names of the owners on all of them being carefully erased.*

But there was nothing else that indicated the marauding life of friend Obediah, whose apartment I conjectured was now my prison, if I except a pretty extensive assortment of arms, pistols, and cutlasses, and a range of massive cases, with iron clamps, which were ranged along one side of the room. I paid my respects to the provender and claret; the hashed chicken was particularly good; bones rather large or so, but flesh white and delicate. Had I known that I was dining upon a guana, or large wood lizard, I scarcely think I would have made so hearty a meal. Long cork, No. 2, followed ditto, No. 1; and as the shades of evening, as poets say, began to fall by the time I had finished it, I toppled quietly into my cot, said my prayers such as they were, and fell asleep.

It must have been towards morning, from the damp freshness of the air that came through the open window, when I was roused by the howling of a dog, a sound which always moves me. I shook myself; but before I was thoroughly awake, it ceased; it appeared to have been close under my window.

I was turning to go to sleep again, when a female, in a small suppressed voice, sung the following snatch of a vulgar Port-Royal ditty, which I scarcely forgive myself for introducing here to polite society.

“Young hoffer come home at night,
Him give me ring and kisses;
Nine months, one picaniny white,
Him white almost like misses.
But misses fum* my back wid switch,
Him say de child for massa;
But massa say him——”

* Fum—flog.

The singer broke off suddenly, as if disturbed by the approach of some one.

"Hush, hush, you old foolish"—said a man's voice, in the same low whispering tone; "you will waken de dronken sentry dere, when we shall all be put in iron. Hush, he will know my voice more better."

It was now clear that some one wished to attract my attention; besides, I had a dreamy recollection of having heard both the male and female voices before. I listened therefore, all alive. The man began to sing in the same low tone.

"Newfoundland dog love him master de mostest
Of all de dog ever I see;
Let him starve him, and kick him, and cuff him de
sorest,
Difference none never makee to he."

There was a pause for a minute or two.

"It no use," the same voice continued; "him either no dere, or he won't hear us."

"Stop," said the female, "stop;—woman head good for something. I know who he shall hear.—Here, good dog, sing psalm; good dog, sing psalm;" and thereupon a long, loud melancholy howl rose, wailing through the night air.

"If that be not my dear old dog Sneezer, it is a deuced good imitation of him," thought I.

The woman again spoke—"Yowl leetle piece more, good dog," and the howl was repeated.

I was now certain. By this time I had risen, and stood at the open window; but it was too dark to see any thing distinctly below. I could barely distinguish two dark figures, and what I concluded was the dog sitting on end between them.

"Who are you? what do you want with me?"

"Speak softly, massa, speak softly, or the sentry may hear us, for all de rum I give him."

Here the dog recognised me, and nearly spoiled sport altogether; indeed, it might have cost us our lives, for he began to bark and frisk about, and to leap violently against the end of the capstan-house, in vain endeavouring to reach the window.

"Down, Sneezer, down, sir; you used to be a dog of some sense; down."

But Sneezer's joy had capsized his discretion, and the sound of my voice pronouncing his name drove him mad altogether, and he bounded against the end of the shed, like a battering-ram.

"Stop, man, stop," and I held down the bight of my neckcloth, with an end in each hand. He retired, took a noble run, and in a trice hooked his forepaws in the handkerchief, and I hauled him in at the window. "Now, Sneezer, down with you, sir, down with you, or your rampaging will get all our throats cut." He cowered at my feet, and was still as a lamb from that moment. I stepped to the window. "Now who are you, and what do you want?" said I.

"Ah, massa, you no know me!"

"How the devil should I? Don't you see it is as dark as pitch?"

"Well, massa, I will tell you; it is *me*, massa."

"I make no great doubt of that; but who may *you* be?"

"Why, you are de foolish person now; make *me* talk to him," said the female. "Massa, neber mind he, dat stupid fellow is my husband, and surely massa know *me*?"

"Now, my very worthy friends, I think you want

to make yourselves known to me; and if so, pray have the goodness to tell me your names, that is, if I can in any way serve you."

"To be sure you can, massa; for dat purpose I come here."

The woman hooked the word out of his mouth.

"Yes, massa, you must know me is Nancy, and dat old stupid is my husband, Peter Mangrove, him who——"

Here Peter chimed in—"Yes, massa, Peter Mangrove is de person you have de honour to address, and—" here he lowered his voice still more, although the whole dialogue from the commencement had been conducted in no higher tone than a loud whisper. "We have secured one big large canoe, near de mout of dis dam hole, which, wid your help, I tink we shall be able to launch troo de surf; and once in smoot water, den no fear but we shall run down de coast safely before de wind till we reach St. Jago."

My heart jumped against my ribs. Here's an unexpected chance, thought I. "But, Peter, how, in the name of mumbo jumbo, came you *here*?"

"Why, massa, you do forget a leetle, dat I am a Creole negro, and not a naked tatoed African, whose exploits, dat is de wonderful ting him *never* do in him's own country, him get embroidered and pinked in gunpower on him breach; beside, I am Christian gentleman like yourself; so dam mumbo jumbo, massa Cringle."

I saw where I had erred. "So say I, Peter, dam mumbo jumbo particularly; but how came you here, man? tell me that."

"Why, massa, I was out in de pilot-boat schooner, wid my wife here, and five more hands, waiting for

de outward bound, tinkin' no harm, when dem piratical vessel catch we, and carry us off. Yankee privateer bad enough; but who ever hear of pilot being carry off? blasphemy dat, carry off a pilot! Who ever dream of such a ting? every shivilized peoples respect pilot—carry off pilot!—oh dear!—” and he groaned in spirit for several seconds.

“And the dog?” inquired I.

“Oh, massa, I could not leave him at home; and since you was good enough to board him wid us, he has messed wid us, ay, and slept wid us; and when we started last, although he showed some dislike at going on board, I had only to say, Sneezer, we go look for you master; and he make such a bound, dat he capsize my old woman deré, heel over head; oh dear, what display, Nancy, you was exhibit!”

“Hold you tongue, Peter; you hab no decency, you old willain.”

“Well, but, Peter, speak out; when are we to make the attempt? where are the rest of your crew?”

“Oh dear! oh dear! dat is de worstest; oh dear!” and he began to cry and to sob like the veriest child.

“Oh, massa”—after he had somewhat recovered himself;—“Oh, massa, dese people devils. Why, de make all de oder on board walk de plank, wid two ten pound shot, one at each foot. Oh, if you had seen de clear shining blue skin, as de became leetle and leetle, and more leetler, down far in de clear green sea! Oh dear! oh dear! Only to tink dat each wavering black spot was fellow-creature like one-self, wid de heart's blood warm in his bosom at de very instant of time we lost sight of him for ever!”

“And how,” inquired I; “did you escape, and

the black dog, and the black—ahem—beg pardon—your wife, I mean; how were you spared?”

“Ah, massa! I can't say; but bad as de were, de seemed to havé a liking for brute beasts, so dem save Sneezzer, and my wife, and myshef; we were de only quadrupeds saved out of de whole crew—Oh dear! Oh dear!”

“Well, well; I know enough now. I will spare you the pains of any farther recital, Peter; so tell me what I am to do.”

“Stop, massa, till I see if de sentry be still sound. I know de fellow, he was one on dem; let me see”—and I heard him through the loose flooring boards walk to the foot of the trap ladder leading up to my berth. The soliloquy that followed was very curious of its kind. The negro had excited himself by a recapitulation of the cruelties exercised on his unfortunate shipmates, and the unwarrantable caption of himself and rib, a deed that in the nautical calendar would rank in atrocity with the murder of a herald or the bearer of a flag of truce. He kept murmuring to himself, as he groped about in the dark for the sentry—“Catch pilot! who ever hear of such a ting? I suppose dem would have pull down lighthouse, if dere had been any for pull—Where is dis sentry rascal? him surely no sober yet?”

The sentry had fallen asleep as he leant back on the ladder, and had gradually slid down into a sitting position, with his head leaning against one of the steps, as he reclined with his back towards it, thus exposing his throat and neck to the groping paw of the black pilot.

“Ah—here him is, snoring heavy as my Nancy—well, drunk still; no fear of him overhearing we—nice

position him lie in—quite convenient—could cut his throat now—slice him like a pumpkin—de devil is surely busy wid me, Peter. I find de very clasp-knife in my starboard pocket beginning to open of himself.”

I tapped on the floor with my foot.

“Ah, tank you massa Tom—de devil nearly get we all in a scrape just now. However I see him is quite sound—de sentry dat is, for de oder never sleep, you know. He had again come under the window. “Now, Lieutenant, in two word, to-morrow night at two bells, in de middle watch, I will be here, and we shall make a start of it; will you venture, sir?”

“Will I?—to be sure I will; but why not now, Peter? why not now?”

“Ah, massa, you no smell de daylight; near day-break already, sir. Can’t make try dis night, but to-morrow night I shall be here punctual.”

“Very well, but the dog, man? if he be found in my quarters, we shall be blown, and I scarcely think he will leave me.”

“Why, true enough, massa; what den is to be done? De people know de dog was catch wid *me*, and if he be found wid *you*, den dey will suspect we communication togidder. What is to be done?”

I was myself not a little perplexed, when Nancy whispered, “de dog have more sense den many Christian person. Tell him he must go wid us *dis one* night, no tell him *dis* night, else him won’t; say *dis one* night, and dat if him don’t, we shall all be deaded; try him, massa.”

I had benefited by more extraordinary hints before

now, although, well as I knew the sagacity of the poor brute, I could not venture to hope it would come up to the expectations of Mrs. Mangrove. "But I'll try.—Here, Sneezzer, here, my boy; you must go home with Peter to-night, or we shall all get into a deuced mess; so here, my boy, here is the bight of the handkerchief again, so through the window you must go; come, Sneezzer, come."

To my great joy and surprise, the poor dumb beast rose from where he had coiled himself at my feet, and after having actually embraced me, by putting his forepaws on my shoulders, as he stood on his hind legs, and licked my face from ear to ear, uttering a low, fondling, nuzzling sort of whine, like a nurse caressing a child, he at once leapt on the window sill, put his forepaws through the handkerchief, and was dropped to the ground again. I could immediately perceive the two dark figures of the pilot and his wife, followed by the dog, glide away as noiselessly as if they had been spirits of the night, until they were lost under the shade of the thick jungle.

I turned in, and—what will not youth and fatigue do?—I fell once more fast asleep, and never opened my eyes until Obed shook me in my cot about eight o'clock in the morning.

"Good morning, Lieutenant. I have sent up your breakfast, but you don't seem inclined to eat it."

"Don't you believe it, my dear Obed. I have been sound asleep till this moment; only stop till I have slipped on my—those shoes, if you please—thank you. Waistcoat—that will do. Now—coffee, fish, yams, and plantains, and biscuit, white as snow, and short as—and eggs—and—zounds! claret to finish

with?—Why, Obed, you surely don't desire that I should enjoy all these delicacies in solitary blessedness?"

"Why, I intend to breakfast with you, if my society be not disagreeable."

"Disagreeable? Not in the least, quite the contrary. That black grouper looks remarkably beautiful. Another piece of yam, if you please.—Shall I fill you a cup of coffee, Obed? For my own part, I always stow the ground tier of my cargo dry, and then take a topdressing. Write this down as an approved axiom with all thorough breakfast-eaters. Why, man, you are off your feed; what are you turning up your ear for, in that incomprehensible fashion, like a duck in thunder? A little of the claret—thank you. The very best butter I have ever eaten out of Ireland—now, some of that Avocado pear—and as for biscuit, Leman never came up to it. I say, man,—hillo, where are you?—rouse ye out of your brown study, man."

"Did you hear that, Mr. Cringle?"

"Hear what?—I heard nothing," rejoined I; "but hand me over that land-crab.—Thank you, and you may send the spawl of that creeping thing along with it; that guana. I had a dislike to eating a lizard at first, but I have got over it somehow;—and a thin slice of ham, a small taste of the unclean beast, Obed—peach-fed, I'll warrant."

There was a pause. The report of a great gun came booming along, reverberated from side to side of the lagoon, the echoes growing shorter and shorter, and weaker and weaker, until they growled themselves asleep in a hollow rumble like distant thunder.

"Ha, ha! Dick Gasket for a thousand! Old Blow-

hard has stuck in your skirts, Master Obed—but now, let us finish our breakfast, man; he won't be *here* this half hour."

I expected to see mine host's forehead lowering like a thunder cloud from my ill-timed funning; but to my surprise, his countenance exhibited more amenity than I thought had been in the nature of the beast, as he replied,—

"Why, Lieutenant, the felucca put to sea last night, to keep a bright look-out at the mouth of our cove here. I suppose that is him overhauling some vessel."

"It may be so;—hush! there's another gun—*Two!*"

Obed changed countenance at the double report.

"I say, Obed, the felucca did not carry more than *one* gun when I saw her, and she has had no time to load and fire again."

He did not answer a word, but continued, with a piece of guana on the end of his fork in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other, as if he had been touched by the wand of a magician. Presently we heard one or two dropping shots, quickly thickening into a rattle of musketry. He threw down his food, picked up his hat, and trundled down stairs, as if the devil had kicked him. "Pedro que hay," I could hear him say to some one below, who appeared to have arrived in great haste, for he gasped for breath—

"Aquí viene la felucha," answered Pedro; "perseguido por dos Lanchas Canoneras llenas de Gente."

"Abordo entonces, Abordo todo el mundo, arma arma, aquí vienen los Engleses, arma, arma."

And all from that instant was a regular hillabaloo. The drums on board the schooners beat to quarters,

a great bell which had been slung on the fork of a tree, formerly the ornament of some goodly ship, no doubt, clanged away at a furious rate, the crews were hurrying to and fro, shouting to each other in Creole Spanish, and Yankee English, while every cannon-shot from the felucca or the boat guns came louder and louder, and the small arms peppered away sharper and sharper. The shouts of the men engaged, both friends and foes, were now heard, and I could hear Obed's voice on board the largest schooner, which lay full in view from my window, giving orders, not only to his own crew, but to those of the others. I heard him distinctly sing out, after ordering them to haul upon the spring on his cable, "Now, men, I need not tell you to fight bravely, for if you are taken, every devil of you will be hanged, so hoist away the signal," and a small black ball flew up through the rigging, until it reached the maintopgallant-mast-head of the schooner, where it hung a moment, and in the next blew out in a large *black* swallow-tailed flag, like a commodore's broad pennant. "Now," shrieked he, "let me see who dares give in with *this* voucher for his honesty flying aloft!"

I twisted and craned myself out of the window, to get a view of what was going on elsewhere; however, I could see nothing but Obed's large schooner from it, all the other craft were out of the range of my eye, being hid by the projecting roof of the shed. The noise continued—the shouting rose higher than ever—the other schooners opened their fire, both cannon and musketry; and from the increasing vehemence of the Spanish exclamations, and the cheering on board Obed's vessels, I concluded the attacking party were having the worst of it. My dog Sneezer now came

jumping and scrambling up the trap-stair, his paws slipping between the bars at every step, his mouth wide open, and his tongue hanging out, while he barked, and yelled, and gasped to get at me, as if his life depended on it. After him I could see the round woolly pate of Peter Mangrove, Esquire, as excited apparently as the dog, and as anxious to get up; but they got jammed together in the small hatch, and stuck there man and beast. At length Peter spoke—"Now, sir, now, Nancy has run on before to the beach with two paddles; now for it, now for it." Down trundled master, and dog, and pilot. By this time there was no one in the lower part of the shed, which was full of smoke, while the infernal tumult on the water still raged as furiously as ever, the shot of all-sorts and sizes hissing, and splashing, and *ricochetting* along the smooth surface of the harbour, as if there had been a sleet of musket and cannon balls and grape. Peter struck out at the top of his speed, Sneezer and I followed; we soon reached the jungle, dashed through a path that had been recently cleared with a cutlass, or billhook, for the twigs were freshly shred, and in about ten minutes reached the high wood. However, no rest for the wicked, although the row seemed lessening now. "Some one has got the worst of it," said I.

"Never mind, master," quoth Peter, "or we shan't get de betterest ourself." And away we galloped again, until I had scarcely a rag an inch square on my back, or *any where* else, and my skin was torn in pieces by the prickly brushes and spear grass. The sound of firing now ceased entirely, although there was loud shouting now and then still.

"Push on, massa—dem will soon miss we."

"True enough, Peter—but what is that? as we came to a bundle of clouts wallopping about in the morass.

"De devil it must be, I tink," said the pilot. "No, my Nancy it is, sticking in the mud up to her waist; what shall us do? you tink, massa, we hab time for can stop to pick she out?"

"Most certainly, Peter—yes, unquestionably."

"Well, massa, you know best." So we tugged at the sable heroine, and first one leg came home out of the tenacious clay, with a *plop*, then the other was drawn out of the quagmire. We then relieved her of the paddles, and each taking hold of one of the poor half-dead creature's hands, we succeeded in getting down to the beach, about half a mile to leeward of the entrance to the cove. We found the canoe there, plumped Nancy (stern foremost) into the bottom of it for ballast, gathered all our remaining energies for a grand shove, and ran her like lightning into the surf, till the water flashed over and over us, reaching to our necks. Next moment we were both swimming, and the canoe, although full of water, beyond the surf, rising and falling on the long swell. We scrambled on board, set Nancy to bale with Peter's hat, seized our paddles, and sculled away like fury for ten minutes right out to sea, without looking once about us, until a musket-shot whistled over our heads, then another, and a third; and I had just time to hold up a white handkerchief, to prevent a whole platoon being let drive at us from the deck of his Britannic Majesty's schooner *Gleam*, lying to about a cable's length to windward of us, with the *Fire-brand* a mile astern of her out at sea. In five minutes we got on board of the former.

"Mercy on me, Tom Cringle, and is this the way we are to meet again?" said old Dick Gasket, as he held out his large, bony, sun-burnt hand to me. "You have led me a nice dance, in a vain attempt to redeem you from bondage, Tom; but I am delighted to see you, although I have not had the credit of being your deliverer—very glad to see you, Tom; but come along, man, come down with me, and let me rig you, not quite a Stultze's fit, you know, but a jury rig—you shall have as good as Dick Gasket's kit can furnish forth, for really you are in a miserable plight, man."

"Bad enough, indeed, Mr. Gasket—many thanks, though—bad enough, as you say; but I would that your boats' crew were in so good a plight."

Mr. Gasket looked earnestly at me—"Why, I have my own misgivings, Mr. Cringle; this morning at daybreak, the Firebrand in company, we fell in with an armed felucca. It was dead calm, and she was out of gunshot, close in with the land. The Firebrand immediately sent the cutter on board, fully armed, with instructions to me to man the launch, and arm her with the boat-gun, and then to send both boats to overhaul the felucca. I did so, standing in as quickly as the light air would take me, to support them; the felucca all this while sweeping in shore as fast as she could pull. But the boats were too nimble for her, and our launch had already saluted her twice from the six pounder in the bow, when the sea-breeze came thundering down in a white squall, that reefed our gaff-topsail in a trice, and blew away a whole lot of light sails, like so many paper kites. When it cleared away, the devil a felucca, boat, or any thing else, was to be seen. Capsized they could not have

been, for all three were not likely to have gone that way; and as to any creek they could have run into, why we could see none. That they had pulled in shore, however, was our conclusion; but here have we been the whole morning, firing signal guns every five minutes without success."

"Did you hear no firing after the squall?" said I.

"Why, some of my people thought they did, but it was that hollow, tremulous, reverberating kind of sound, that it might have been thunder; and the breeze blew too strong to have allowed us to hear musketry a mile and a half to windward of them. I did think I saw some smoke rise, and blow off now and then, but"——

"But me no buts, Master Richard Gasket; Peter Mangrove here, as well as myself, saw your people pursue the felucca into the lion's den, and I fear they have been crushed in his jaws." I briefly related what we had seen—Gasket was in great distress.

"They must have been taken, Mr. Cringle. The fools, to allow themselves to be trepanned in this way! we must stand out and speak the corvette—All hands make sail!"

I could not help smiling at the grandeur of Dick's emphasis on the *all*, when twenty hands, one-third of them boys, and the others landsmen, scrambled up from below, and began to pull and haul in no very seamanlike fashion. He noticed it. "Ah, Tom, I know what you are grinning at, but I fear it has been no laughing matter to my poor boats' crew—all my best hands gone!"

Presently being under the Firebrand's lee quarter, we lowered down the boat and went on board, where for the first time, the extreme ludicrousness

villain, whether a Mid or no I could not tell, yelling out in the throng, "Hurra for Tom Cringle's Tail!"

I was fairly beginning to lose countenance, when up jumped Sneezer to my relief out of the boat, with an old cocked hat lashed on his head, a marine's jacket buttoned round his body, and his coal-black muzzle bedaubed with pipe clay, regularly monkeyfied, the momentary handiwork of some wicked little reefers, while a small pipe sung out quietly, as if not intended to reach the quarter deck, although it did do so, "And here comes the *last joint* of Mr. Cringle's Tail." The dog began floundering and jumping about, and walloping amongst the people, most of whom knew him, and immediately drew their attention from me and my party to himself; for away they all bundled forward, dog and men tumbling and scrambling about like so many children, leaving the coast clear to me and my attendants. The absurdity of the whole exhibition had for an instant, even under the very nose of a proverbially taught hand, led to freedoms which I had believed impossible in a man of war. However, there was too much serious matter in hand, independently of any other consideration, to allow the merriment created by our appearance to last long. Captain N——, immediately on being informed how matters stood, with seamanlike promptitude determined to lighten the Gleam, and send her in with the boats, for the purpose of destroying the haunt of the pirates, and recovering the men, if they were still alive; but before any thing could be done, it came on to blow, and for a week we had great difficulty in maintaining our position off the coast against the strength of the gale and lee current. It was on the Sunday morning after I had escaped that it

he was even a much queerer-looking figure than myself. He had been encumbered with no garment beside his trousers when we started, and these had been reduced, in the scramble through the brake, to a waistband and two kneebands, from which a few shreds fluttered in the breeze, the rest of his canvass having been entirely torn out of the bolt-ropes. For an upper dress he had borrowed a waistcoat without sleeves from the purser of the schooner, which hung loose and unbuttoned before, while behind, being somewhat of the shortest, some very prominent parts of his stern frame were disclosed, as even an apology for a shirt had he none. Being a *decent* man, however, he had tied his large straw hat round his waist, by strings fastened to the broad brims, which nearly met behind, so that the crown covered his loins before, like a petard, while the sameness of his black naked body was relieved by being laced with blood from numberless lacerations.

Next came the female—"This is the pilot's wife, Captain N—," again sung out old Dick; but decency won't let me venture on a description of poor Nancy's equipment, beyond mentioning, that one of the Gleam's crew had given her a pair of trowsers, which, as a sailor has no bottom, and Nancy was not a sailor, were most ludicrously scanty at top, and the devil another rag of any kind had the poor creature on, but a handkerchief across her bosom. There was no standing all this; the crew forward and in the waist were all on the broad grin, while the officers, after struggling to maintain their gravity until they were nearly suffocated, fairly gave in, and the whole ship echoed with the most uproarious laughter; a young

villain, whether a Mid or no I could not tell, yelling out in the throng, "Hurra for Tom Cringle's Tail!"

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moderated sufficiently for our purpose, when both vessels stood close in, and Peter and I were sent to reconnoitre the entrance of the port in the gig. Having sounded and taken the bearings of the land, we returned on board, when the Gleam's provisions were taken out and her water started. The ballast was then shifted, so as to bring her by the head, that she might thus draw less water by being on an even keel, all sharp vessels of her class requiring much deeper water aft than forward; the corvette's launch, with a 12-pound carronade fitted, was then manned and armed with thirty seamen and marines, under the command of the second lieutenant; the jolly boat, and the two quarter boats, each with twelve men, followed in a string, under the third lieutenant, the master, and the senior midshipman; thirty picked hands were added to the schooner's crew, and I was desired to take the gig, with six smart hands and Peter Mangrove, and to accompany the whole as pilot; but to pull out of danger so soon as the action commenced, so as to be ready to help any disabled boat, or to carry orders from the commanding officer. At nine in the morning, we gave three cheers, and leaving the corvette, with barely forty hands on board, the Gleam made sail towards the harbour's mouth, with the boats in tow; but when we got within musket-shot of the entrance, the breeze failed us, when the order of sailing was reversed, the boats now taking the schooner in tow, preceded by your humble servant in the gig. We dashed safely through the small canal of blue water which divided the surf at the harbour's mouth, having hit it to a nicety; but when about a pistol shot from the entrance, the channel narrowed to a muddy creek, not more than twenty

yards wide, with high trees, and thick underwood close to the water's edge. All was silent, the sun shone down upon us like the concentrated rays of a burning-glass, and there was no breeze to dissipate the heavy dank mist that hovered over the surface of the unwholesome canal, nor was there any appearance of a living thing, save and except a few startled water-fowl, and some guanoes on the trees, and now and then an alligator like a black log of charred wood, would roll off a slimy bank of brown mud, with a splash into the water. We rowed on, the schooner every now and then taking the ground, but she was always quickly warped off again by a kedge; at length, after we had in all proceeded it might be about a mile from the beach, we came to a boom of strong timber clamped with iron, stretching across the creek. We were not unprepared for this; one of two old 32-pound carronades, which, in anticipation of some obstruction of the sort, had been got on deck from amongst the Gleam's ballast, and properly slung, was now made fast to the middle timber of the boom, and let go, when the weight of it sunk it to the bottom, and we passed on. We pulled on for about half a mile farther, when I noticed, high up on a sunny cliff, that shot boldly out into the clear blue heavens, a small red flag suddenly run up to the top of a tall, scathed, branchless palm tree, where it flared for a moment in the breeze like the flame of a torch, and then as suddenly disappeared. "Come, they are on the lookout for us, I see." The hills continued to close on us as we advanced, and that so precipitously that we might have been crushed to pieces had half a dozen active fellows, without any risk to themselves, for the trees would have screened them, simply loosened

some of the fragments of rock that impended over us, so threateningly, it seemed as if a little finger could have sent them bounding and thundering down the mountain side; but this either was not the game of the people we were in search of, or Obed's spirit and energy had been crushed out of him by the heart-depressing belief that his hours were numbered, for no active obstruction was offered. We now suddenly rounded an abrupt corner of the creek, and there we were, full in front of the schooners, who, with the felucca in advance, were lying in line of battle, with springs on their cables. The horrible black pennant was, in the present instance, nowhere to be seen; indeed, why such an impolitic step as ever to have shown it at all was taken in the first attack, I never could understand, for the force was too small to have created any serious fear of being captured, (unless, indeed, it had been taken for an advanced guard, supported by a stronger,) while it must have appeared probable to Obediah, that the loss of the two boats would, in all likelihood, lead to a more powerful attempt, when, if it were successful, the circumstance of having fought under such an infernal emblem, must have ensured a pirate's death on the gibbet to every soul who was taken, unless he had intended to have murdered all the witnesses of it. But since proof in my person and the pilot's existed, now, if ever, was the time for mortal resistance, and to have hoisted it, for they knew that they all fought with halts about their necks. They had all the Spanish flag flying except the Wave, which showed American colours, and the felucca, which had a white flag hoisted, from which last, whenever our gig appeared, a canoe shoved off, and pulled towards us. The of-

ficer, if such he might be called, also carried a white flag in his hand. He was a daring-looking fellow, and dashed up along side of me.

The incomprehensible folly of trying at this time of day to cloak the real character of the vessels, puzzled me, and does so to this hour. I have never got a clew to it, unless it was that Obed's strong mind had given way before his superstitious fears, and others had now assumed the right of both judging and acting for him in this his closing scene. He at once recognised me, but seemed neither surprised nor disconcerted at seeing me, or the strength of the force which accompanied me. He asked me in Spanish if I commanded it; I told him I did not, that the captain of the schooner was the senior officer. "Then will you be good enough, Mr. Cringle, to go on board with me, to interpret for me?"—"Certainly." In half a minute we were both on the Gleam's deck, the crews of the boats that had her in tow lying on their oars. "You are the commander of this force?" said the Spaniard. "I am," said old Gasket, who had figged himself out in full puff after the manner of the ancients, as if he had been going to church, instead of to fight; "and who may you be?" "I command one of these Spanish schooners, sir, which your boats so unwarrantably attacked a week ago, although you are at peace with Spain. But even had they been enemies, they were in a friendly port, which should have protected them."—"All very good oysters," quoth old Dick; "and pray, was it an honest trick of you, or your friend, to cabbage my young friend, Lieutenant Cringle, there, as if you had been slavers kidnapping the Bungoes in the Bight of Biafra, and then to fire on and murder my people when sent in to

claim him.”—“As to carrying off that young gentleman, it was no affair of ours; he was brought away by the master of that American schooner; but so far as regards firing on your people, I believe they fired first. But they are not murdered; on the contrary, they have been well used, and are now on board that felucca. I am come to surrender the whole fifteen to you.”—“The *whole fifteen!* and what have you made of the other *twelve?*”—“Gastados,” said the fellow, with all the sangfroid in the world, “gastados, (spent or expended) by their own folly.”

“Oh, they are *expended*, are they? then give us the *fifteen*.”—“Certainly, but you will, in this case, withdraw your force, of course?”—“We shall see about that,—go and send us the men.” He jumped down into the canoe, and shoved off;—whenever he reached the felucca, he struck the white flag, and hoisted the Spanish in its stead, and by hauling on a spring, he brought her to cover the largest schooner so effectually, that we could not fire a shot at her without going through the felucca. We could see all the men leave this latter vessel in two canoes, and go on board one of the other crafts. There was now no time to be lost, so I dashed at the felucca in the gig, and broke open the hatches, where we found the captured seamen and their gallant leader, Lieutenant ***, in a sorry plight, expecting nothing but to be blown up, or instant death by shot or the knife. We released them, and, sending to the Gleam for ammunition and small arms, led the way in the felucca, by Mr. Gasket's orders, to the attack, the corvette's launch supporting us: while the schooner, with the other craft were scraping up as fast as they could. We made straight for the largest schooner, which,

with her consorts, now opened a heavy fire of grape and musketry, which we returned with interest. I can tell little of what took place, till I found myself on the pirate's quarter-deck, after a desperate tussle, and having driven the crew overboard, with dead and wounded men thickly strewed about, and our fellows busy firing at their surviving antagonists, as they were trying to gain the shore by swimming.

Although the schooner we carried was the Commodore, and commanded by Obediah in person, yet the pirates, that is, the Spanish part of them, by no means showed the fight I expected. While we were approaching, no fire could be hotter, and their yells and cheers were tremendous; but the instant we laid her alongside with the felucca, and swept her decks with a discharge of grape from the carronade, under cover of which we boarded on the quarter, while the launch's people scrambled up at the bows, their hearts failed them, a regular panic overtook them, and they jumped overboard, without waiting for a taste either of cutlass or boarding-pike. The captain, himself, however, with about ten Americans, stood at bay round the long gun which, notwithstanding their great inferiority in point of numbers to our party, they manfully fired three several times at us, after we had carried her aft; but we were so close that the grape came past us like a round shot, and only killed one hand at each discharge,—whereas, at thirty yards farther off, it might have made a pretty “tableau” of the whole party, by having had room to spread. I hailed Obed twice to surrender, as our people, staggered by the extreme hardihood of the small group, hung back for an instant; but he either did not hear me, or would not, for the only reply he seemed in-

clined to make was by slewing round the gun so as to bring me on with it, and the next moment, a general rush was made, when the whole party was cut down, with three exceptions, one of whom was Obed himself, who, getting on the gun, made a desperate bound over the men's heads, and jumped overboard. He struck out gallantly, the shot pattering round him like the first of a thunder shower, but he dived apparently unhurt, and I lost sight of him.

The other vessels having also been carried, the firing was all on our side by this time, and I, along with the other officers, was exerting myself to stop the butchery. "Cease firing, men; for shame, you see they no longer resist"—and my voice was obeyed by all except the fifteen we had released, who were absolutely mad with fury—perfect fiends; such uncontrollable fierceness I had never witnessed,—indeed; I had nearly cut one of them down before I could make them knock off firing. "Don't fire, sir," cried I to one. "Ay, ay, sir; but that scoundrel made *me wash his shirts*," and he let drive at a poor devil, who was squattering and swimming away towards the shore, and shot him through the head.—"I will run you through, if you fire at that man!" shouted I to another, a marine, who was taking aim at no less a personage than friend Obed, who had risen to breathe, and was swimming after the others, *but the very last man of all*. "No," said he, with an oath, "*he made me wash his trousers, sir.*" He fired—the pirate stretched out his arms, turned slowly on his back, with his face towards me. I thought he gave me a sort of "Et tu, Brute" look, but I dare say it was fancy—his feet began to sink, and he gradually disappeared, a few bubbles of froth and blood

marking the spot where he went down. He had been shot dead. I will not attempt to describe my feelings at this moment,—they burned themselves in on my heart at the time, and the impression is indelible. Whether I had or had not acted, in one sense, unjustly, in thrusting myself so conspicuously forward in the attempt to capture him after what had passed between us, forced itself upon my judgment. I had certainly promised that I would, in no way that I could help, be instrumental in his destruction or seizure, provided he landed me at St. Jago, or put me on board a friendly vessel. He did neither; so his part of the compact might be considered broken; but then it was out of his power to have fulfilled it; besides, he not only threatened my life subsequently, but actually wounded me; still, however, on great provocation. But what “is writ, is writ.” He has gone to his account, pirate as he was, murderer, if you will; yet I had, and still have a tear for his memory,—and many a time have I prayed on my bare knees that his blue agonized dying look might be erased from my memory;—but this can never be. What he had been I never learned; but it is my deliberate opinion, that, with a clear stage and opportunity, he would have forced himself out from the surface of society for good or for evil. The unfortunates who survived him but to expiate their crimes on the gibbet at Port Royal, said he had joined them from a New York privateer, but they knew nothing farther of him beyond the fact, that, by his skill and desperate courage, within a month he had, by common acclaim, been elected captain of the whole band. There was a story current on board the corvette, of a small trading craft, with a person answering his de-

scription, having been captured in the Chesapeake, by one of the squadron, and sent to Halifax for adjudication; the master, as in most cases of the kind, being left on board, which, from that hour, had never been heard of, neither vessel, nor prize, crew nor captain, until two Americans were taken out of a slaver off the Cape de Verds, by the Firebrand, about a year afterwards, after a most brave and determined attempt to escape, both of whom were, however, allowed to enter, but subsequently deserted off Sandy Hook by swimming ashore, in consequence of a pressed hand hinting that Obed had been the master of the vessel above mentioned.

All resistance having ceased, the few of the pirates who escaped, having scampered into the woods, where it would have been vain to follow them, we secured our prisoners, and at the close of a bloody day, for fatal had it been to friend and foe, the prizes were got under weigh, and before nightfall, we were all at sea, sailing in a fleet under convoy of the corvette and Gleam.

CHAPTER XIII.

VOMITO PRIETO.

THE second and acting third lieutenants were on board the prizes—the purser was busy in his vocation—the doctor ditto. Indeed, he and his mates had more on their hands than they could well manage. The first lieutenant was engaged on deck, and the master was in his cot, suffering from a severe contusion; so when I got on board, and dived into the gun-room in search of some crumbs of comfort, the deuce a living soul was there to welcome me, except the gun-room steward, who speedily produced some cold meat, and asked me if I would take a glass of swizzle.

The food I had no great fancy to, although I had not tasted a morsel since six o'clock in the morning, and it was now eight in the evening; but the offer of the grog sounded gratefully in mine ear, and I was about tackling to a stout rummer of the same, when a smart, dandified shaver, with gay mother-of-pearl buttons on his jacket, as thick set as peas, presented his tallow-chops at the door. “Captain N—— desires me to say, that he will be glad of your company in the cabin, Mr. Cringle.”

“My compliments—I will wait on him so soon as

I have had a snack. We have had no dinner in the gun-room to-day yet, you know, Mafame."

"Why, it was in the knowledge of that the Captain sent me, sir. He has not had any dinner either; but it is now on the table, and he waits for you."

I was but little in spirits, and, to say sooth, was fitter for my bed than society; but the Captain's advances had been made with so much kindness, that I got up, and made a strong endeavour to rouse myself; and, having made my toilet as well as my slender means admitted, I followed the Captain's steward into the cabin.

I started—why, I could not well tell—as the sentry at the door stood to his arms when I passed in; and, as if I had been actually possessed by some wandering spirit, who had taken the small liberty of using my faculties and tongue without my concurrence, I hastily asked the man if he was an American?—He stared in great astonishment for a short space—turned his quid—and then rapped out, with an oath, as angrily as respect for a commissioned officer would let "No, sir!"

This startled me as much as the question I had almost unconsciously—and, I may say, involuntarily—put to the marine had surprised him, and I made a full stop, and leant back against the door-post. The Captain, who was walking up and down the cabin, had heard me speak, but without comprehending the nature of my question, and now recalled me in some measure to myself, by inquiring if I wanted anything. I replied, hurriedly, that I did not.

"Well, Mr. Cringle, dinner is ready, so take that chair at the foot of the table, will you?"

I sat down mechanically, as it appeared to me—

for a strange swimming dizzy sort of sensation had suddenly overtaken me, accompanied by a whoreson tingling, as Shakspeare hath it, in' my ears. I was unable to eat a morsel; but I could have drunk the ocean, had it been claret or vin-de-grave—to both of which I helped myself as largely as good manners would allow, or a little beyond, mayhap. All this while the Captain was stowing his cargo with great zeal, and tifting away at the fluids as became an honest sailor after so long a fast, interlarding his operations with a civil word to me now and then, without any especial regard as to the answer I made him, or, indeed, caring greatly whether I answered him or not. “Sharp work you must have had, Mr. Cringle—should have liked to have been with you myself. Help yourself, before passing that bottle—Zounds, man, never take a bottle by the bilge—grasp the neck, man, at least in this fervent climate—thank you. Pity you had not caught the Captain, though. What you told me of that man very much interested me, coupled with the prevailing reports regarding him in the ship—daring dog he must have been—can't forget how gallantly he weathered us, when we chased him.”

I broke silence for the first time. Indeed, I could scarcely have done so sooner, even had I chosen it, for the gallant officer was rather continuous in his yarn-spinning. However, he had nearly dined, and was leaning back, allowing the Champagne to trickle leisurely from a glass half a yard long, which he had applied to his lips, when I said,—

“Well, the imagination does sometimes play one strange tricks—I verily believe in second sight now, Captain, for at this very instant I am regularly the

fool of my senses,—but pray don't laugh at me;" and I lay back on my chair, and pressed my hands over my shut eyes and hot burning temples, which were now throbbing as if the arteries would have burst. The captain, who was evidently much surprised at my abruptness, said something hurriedly and rather sharply in answer, but I could not for the life of me mark what it was. I opened my eyes again, and looked towards the object that had before riveted my attention. It was neither more nor less than the captain's cloak, a plain, unpretending, substantial blue garment, lined with white, which, on coming below, he had cast carelessly down on the locker, that ran across the cabin behind him, and just under the stern windows. It was about eighteen feet from me, and as there was no light nearer it than the swinging lamp over the table at which we were seated, the whole after-part of the cabin thereabouts was thrown considerably into the shade. The cape of the cloak was turned over, showing the white lining, and was rather bundled, as it were, into a round heap, about the size of a man's head. When first I looked at it, there was a dreamy, glimmering indistinctness about it that I could not well understand, and I would have said, had it been possible, that the wrinkles and folds in it were beginning to be instinct with motion, to creep and crawl as it were. At all events, the false impression was so strong as to jar my nerves, and make me shudder with horror. I knew there was no such thing, as well as Macbeth, but nevertheless it was with an indescribable feeling of curiosity, dashed with awe, that I stared intently at it, as if fascinated, while almost unwittingly I made the remark already mentioned.

I had expected that the unaccountable appearance which had excited my attention so strongly, would have vanished with the closing of my eyes; but it did not, for when I looked at it again, the working and shifting of the folds of the cloth still continued, and even more distinctly than before.

"Very extraordinary all this," I murmured to myself.

"Pray, Mr. Cringle, be sociable, man," said the captain; "what the deuce do you see, that you stare over my shoulder in that way? Were I a woman now, I should tremble to look behind me, while you were glaring aft in that wild, moon-struck sort of fashion."

"By all that is astonishing," I exclaimed in great agitation, "if the folds of the cape have not arranged themselves into the very likeness of his dying face! Why it is his face, and no fanciful grouping of my heated brain. Look there, sir—look there—I know it can't be—but *there he lies*,—the very features and upper part of the body, lith and limb, as when he disappeared beneath the water when he was shot dead.

I felt the boiling blood, that had been rushing through my system like streams of molten lead, suddenly freeze and coagulate about my heart, impeding my respiration to a degree that I thought I should have been suffocated. I had the feeling as if my soul was going to take wing. It was not fear, nor could I say I was in pain, but it was so utterly unlike any thing I had ever experienced before, and so indescribable, that I thought to myself—"this may be death."

"Why, what a changeable rose you are, Master Cringle," said Captain N——, good-naturedly; "your

face was like the north-west moon in a fog but a minute ago, and now it is as pale as a lily—blue white, I declare. Why, my man, you must be ill, and seriously too.”

His voice dissipated the hideous chimera—the folds fell, and relapsed into their own shape, and the cloak was once more a cloak, and nothing more—I drew a long breath. “Ah, it is gone at last,” cried I;—and then aware of the strange effect my unaccountable incoherence must have had on the skipper, I thought to brazen it out by trying the free and easy line, which was neither more nor less than arrant impertinence in our relative positions. “Why, I have been heated a little, and amusing myself with sundry vain imaginings, but allow me to take wine with you, Captain,”—filling a tumbler with vin-de-grave to the brim, as I spoke. “Success to you, sir—here’s to your speedy promotion—may you soon get a crack frigate; as for me, I intend to be Archbishop of Canterbury, or maid of honour to the Queen of Sheba, or something in the heathen mythology.”

I drank off the wine, although I had the greatest difficulty in steadying my trembling hand, and carrying it to my lips; but notwithstanding my increasing giddiness, and the buzzing of my ears, and swimming of mine eyes, I noticed the captain’s face of amazement as he exclaimed—“The boy is either mad or drunk, by Jupiter.”—I could not stand his searching and angry look, and in turning my eye, it again fell on the cloak, which now seemed to be stretched out at greater length, and to be altogether more voluminous than it was before. I was forcibly struck with this, for I was certain no one had touched it. “It heaves, it heaves!” I exclaimed, much moved: “how

is this? I never thought to have believed such things,—it stirs again—it takes the figure of a man—as if it were a pall covering *his* body. Pray, Captain N——, what trick is this?—Is there any thing below that cloak there?”

“What cloak do you mean?”

“Why, that blue one lying on the locker there—is there any cat or dog in the cabin?”—and I started on my legs.—“Captain N——,” I continued, with the greatest vehemence, “tell me *what* is there below that cloak?”

He looked surprised beyond all measure.

“Why, Mr. Cringle, I cannot for the soul of me comprehend you; indeed I cannot; but, Mafame, indulge him. See if *there be any thing* below my cloak.”

The servant walked to the locker, and lifted up the cape of it, and was in the act of taking it from the locker, when I impetuously desired the man to leave it alone. “I can’t look on him again,” said I; while the faintishness increased, so that I could hardly speak. “Don’t move the covering from his face, I entreat you—don’t remove it,”—and I lay back in my chair, screening my eyes from the lamp with my hands, and shuddering with an icy chill from head to foot.

The Captain, who had hitherto maintained the well-bred patronising, although, somewhat distant air of a superior officer to an inferior who was his guest, addressed me now in an altered tone, and with a brotherly kindness.

“Mr. Cringle, I have some knowledge of you, and I know many of your friends; so I must take the liberty of an old acquaintance with you. This

day's work has been a severe one, but your share in it, especially after your past fatigues, has been very trying, and, as I will report it, I hope it may clap a good spoke in your wheel; but you are overheated, and have been over-excited; fatigue has broken you down, and I must really request you will take something warm, and turn in.—Here, Mafame, get the carpenter's mate to secure that cleat, on the weather side there, and sling my spare cot for Mr. Cringle. You will be cooler here than in the gun-room."

I heard his words without comprehending their meaning. I sat and stared at him, quite conscious all the time, of the extreme impropriety, not to say indecency of my conduct; but there was a spell on me; I tried to speak, but could not; and, believing that I was either possessed by some dumb devil, or struck with palsy, I rose up, bowed to Captain N—, and straightway hied me on deck.

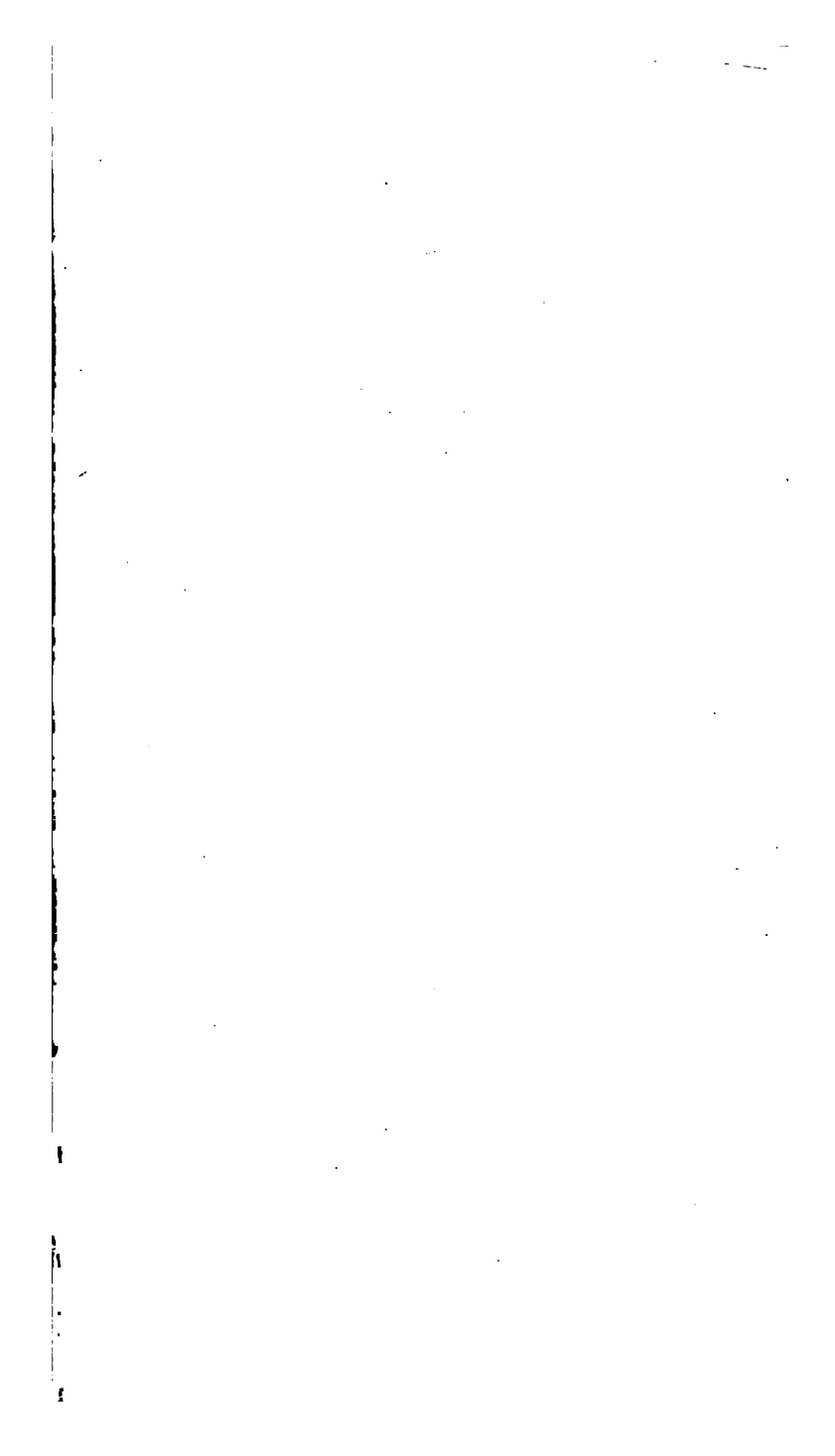
I could hear him say to his servant, as I was going up the ladder, "Look after that young gentleman, Mafame, and send Isaac to the Doctor, and bid him come here now;" and then, in a commiserating tone,—"Poor young fellow, what a pity!" When I got on deck all was quiet. The cool fresh air had an instantaneous effect on my shattered nerves, the violent throbbing in my head ceased, and I began to hug myself with the notion that my distemper, whatever it might have been, had beaten a retreat.

Suddenly I felt so collected and comfortable, as to be quite alive to the loveliness of the scene. It was a beautiful moonlight night; such a night as is nowhere to be seen *without* the Tropics, and not often *within* them. There was just breeze enough to set the sails to sleep, although not so strong as to prevent

their giving a low murmuring flap now and then, when the corvette rolled a little heavier than usual in the long swell. There was not a cloud to be seen in the sky, not even a stray shred of thin fleecy gauze-like vapour, to mark the discretion of the upper current of the air, by its course across the moon's disk, which was now at the full, and about half-way up her track in the liquid heavens.

END OF VOL. I.

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